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Aden To The Hadhramaut

by the same author

THE WELLS OF IBN SA'UD

ONBEKEND ARABIË

(also in Sweden)

ONTWAKEND ARABIË

MIJN WEG NAAR ARABIË EN DE ISLAAM

IBNU SA'UD

(in Malay)

HADHRAMAUT, DAS WUNDERLAND

(in German, in Switzerland)



A street in Shibām

ADEN TO THE HADHRAMAUT

A Journey in South Arabia

by

D. van der Meulen

With Foreword by

SIR BERNARD REILLY, K.C.M.G., C.I.E., O.B.E.

GOVERNOR OF ADEN 1937-40

JOHN MURRAY

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To
My Wife
but for whose enthusiasm
and devotion
the present work would not have been written

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* These Illustrations were first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

FOREWORD

COLONEL VAN DER MEULEN, who in this book has made a second valuable and informative contribution to knowledge of the Aden Protectorate, is a distinguished Dutchman, who has been over thirty years in official employment in the east, partly in the Netherlands East Indies and partly in Arabia. A student of Arabic and of Islam, he found a congenial task in exploring the home in the Hadhramaut of many of the Arabs who had migrated from Southern Arabia to Java and Malaya. His study of people and problems of that remarkable land led, in 1932, to the publication of his book *Hadhramaut: Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*, written before the British had attempted to shoulder the burden of bringing peace and progress to a country which at that time was a Protectorate in little more than name.

Colonel van der Meulen's new book is an illuminating record of travel in the Aden Protectorate in 1939 on the eve of the world war, which in its course produced serious repercussions and changes in conditions in the Protectorate, and especially in the Hadhramaut, which was the main objective of the writer's journey. The Japanese conquest of Singapore and Java, cutting off the sources of their incomes from the wealthy Hadhramis, reduced many of them to poverty, and the troubles of the country were subsequently accentuated by famine. The account that Colonel van der Meulen gives in this book is of conditions immediately before these afflictions befell the people of this part of the Aden Protectorate, and he was able meanwhile to see and to record the effects of the efforts made by the British since he had written his earlier book, to extend peace and order to these remote regions.

The interest of this journey of Colonel van der Meulen and his companions is enhanced by the fact that much of the routes traversed lay in parts of the Aden Protectorate not previously described to the outside world. The Hadhramaut valley is known through the writings of the Bents, Ingrams, Freya Stark and Van der Meulen himself; but, by choosing the overland way from Aden to the Hadhramaut, the author on this occasion broke what is new ground to the outside public, although not to Political Officers and others who serve in the Protectorate. His excursion to the north of the valley into the territory of the Awamir tribe and towards the Bahr as Safi—the "Sea of Pure Sand"—was also a novel enterprise, and he

Foreword

followed an unusual route in his return from the Hadhramaut valley to the coast.

Colonel van der Meulen's observations and comments cover a wide field—Himyaritic remains, modern Hadhrami architecture and its deterioration in Saiwūn, irrigation and the future of agriculture, the engineering skill of the Hadhramis, the exploits of other explorers, Bertram Thomas, Philby and Cheesman, Freya Stark's theories of the incense road, slavery, the position of women, Beduins and their songs, and the threat to their means of livelihood from motor competition on modern roads, Yemeni claims on Aden Protectorate territory, the relations of Hadhramaut and Britain, and Hadhrami feelings about Palestine.

Colonel van der Meulen's writing is graphic and simple. He carries the reader with him in all the details of his journey—its dirt, discomforts, disappointments and fatigue, and its moments of exhilaration and enthusiasm. He is fascinated by the grandeur and beauty of the mountains and the valleys, and even the forbidding wastes of the jōl seem to entice him to endure on their waterless heights what he finely describes as "the dumbing heat of noon."

It is a fine book, a standard to be expected from a traveller and writer of Colonel van der Meulen's quality, and it is a valuable addition to the increasing volume of literature that is making Southern Arabia known to the outside world.

BERNARD REILLY

January, 1947.

PREFACE

THIS book is the English version of a Dutch manuscript that suffered many vicissitudes. My first intention was to publish my narrative in Leyden where I began my oriental studies and where my first book in English on the Hadhramaut was published. When the invasion of Holland made this impossible I was persuaded to send the original manuscript to the Netherlands East Indies for publication in Batavia. The Japanese invaded Java when the original manuscript, together with a selection of the best photographs, was safely locked in the Batavian publisher's safe. I therefore began an English translation of the manuscript and, with the encouragement of friends to whom I should like now publicly to express my indebtedness, completed the present work.

In the transliteration of Arabic words I have followed the R.G.S. II system of the Royal Geographical Society. For place-names I have, for the most part, followed the spelling given in the third edition of the list for South-West Arabia prepared and revised by the late Colonel Lake and issued by the Colonial Office in 1941. I have only departed from this list when, as in the case of Saiwūn (which Colonel Lake gives as Saiyūn) a patent error has, in my view, been made. My spelling of Saiwūn has the support of the learned Hadhrami Seiyid Muhammad bin Hāshim.

I welcome this opportunity of placing on record my grateful thanks to the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Aden at the time of our visit, Sir Bernard Reilly, K.C.M.G., C.I.E., O.B.E., and through him to all those officers mentioned and unmentioned in the body of the narrative who gave us their help and assistance.

I am indebted to my friends, Professor Hermann von Wissman, Dr. J. H. Kramers of Leyden University, and George Rentz of the American University of Cairo, for their valuable aid in reading the proofs and for their expert advice. The Royal Geographical Societies of Holland and England offered their material and moral support which were an encouragement to the achieving of the aim that we had set ourselves.

The interests of Great Britain and Holland are inextricably mixed not only in the Hadhramaut but also in the Far East. The close collaboration that existed between our Dutch administration in Indonesia and the British administration centred on Singapore was proof of the community of our

Preface

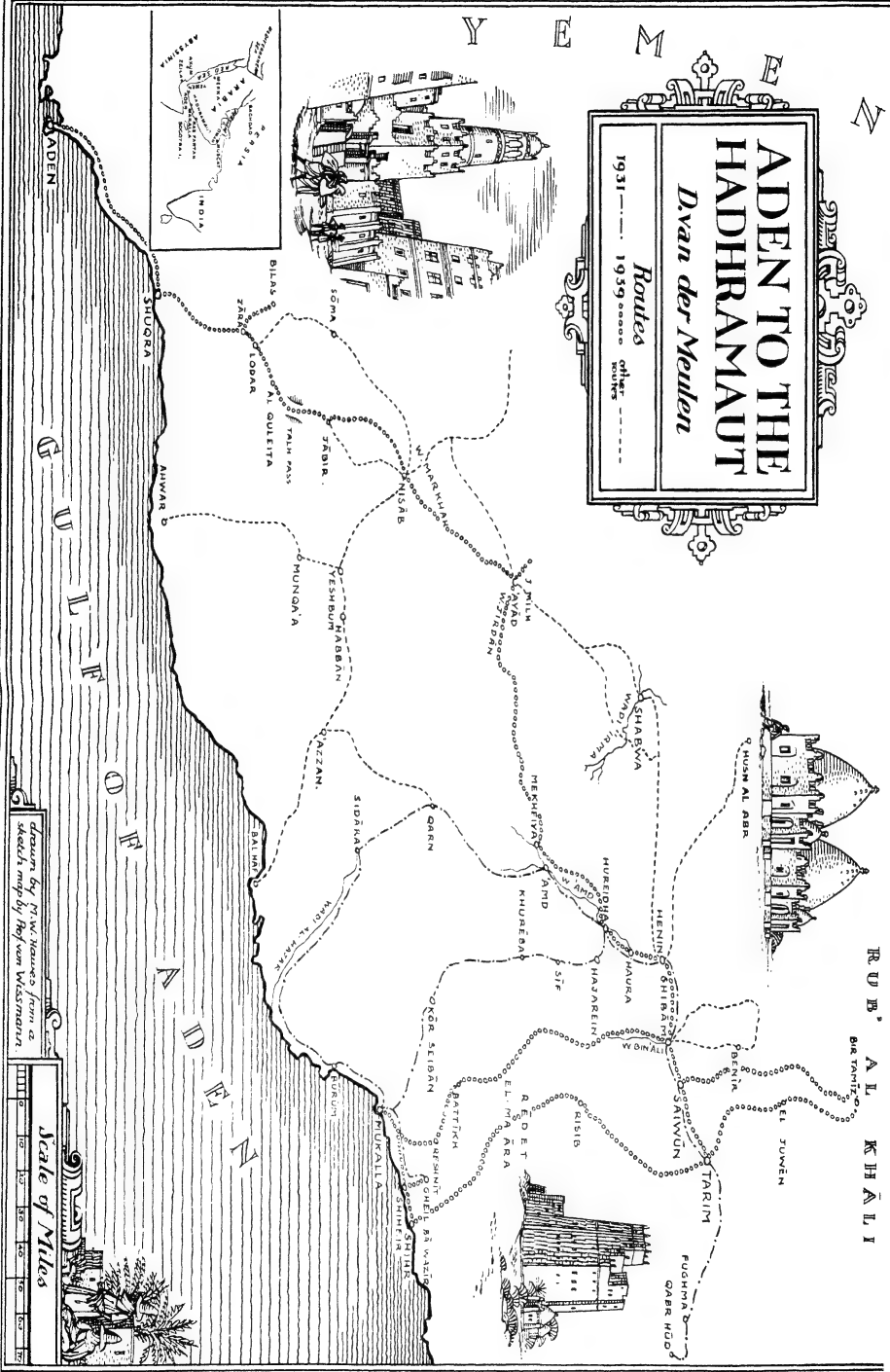
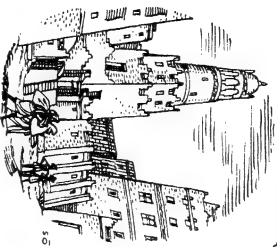
interests. I trust that one good that will emerge from the evil of this war will be the disappearance of the last vestiges of that antipathy and distrust that both our nations received as a legacy of the past, so that we may work closely hand in hand in the great work of civilization that lies before us. I offer the present narrative as a personal contribution to complete amity and understanding between our two nations in the future.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.—Conditions in Europe and difficulties of communications have prevented Professor von Wissmann from completing the detailed map which will include a great deal of new and valuable information on the unmapped parts of South Arabia covered by this journey. It is hoped that this map may some day be published separately. However, for this book, a sketch map has been drawn on the basis of information which Professor von Wissmann has been able to supply.

The author's duties in Batavia made it impossible for him to correct the proofs of his book himself. In addition to those whose help the author acknowledges in his Preface the publisher would like to thank Mr. M. Aourousseau and Miss Vargas, of the Royal Geographical Society, for generous assistance.

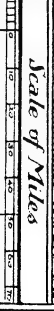
D.van der Meulen

1931—	1939	other routes
1931—	1939	other routes



drawn by M.W. Haues from a sketch map by Prof. von Wissmann.

Scale of Miles



INTRODUCTION

The Inception of the Plan

TEN years had passed since the successful conclusion of our first attempt to penetrate into a part of Southern Arabia where Westerners had not travelled much. The Hadhramaut was our goal. From that country had come and are still coming those enterprising Arabs who have a very special place in the Netherlands East Indies and who play there an important economic role. Little was then known of their country and it was logical that we of the Netherlands Indies should want to learn something about it. The world was becoming smaller and communications were being intensified and speeded up. Already, during the favourable monsoon season, there was a regular shipping line between Batavia and Mukalla, the port for the Hadhramaut on the southern Arabian coast. There the swarming Hadhramis were picked up or brought back by Dutch ships. There stood a beautiful white town, built on a narrow strip of coast at the foot of steep rocks closely packed together along the rapidly shelving Indian Ocean. What lay behind Mukalla, behind that forbidding mountain range which seemed to bar the entrance to the country beyond? The Hadhramis themselves gave little exact information about their own land for they soon saw that they were either not understood or not believed. Their native land was for many of them a country of great austerity, often a land of hunger and want. The struggle for life they had learned to wage there, and had seen all around them, had been a good preparation for the task of making a living outside its own poor borders. They brought with them from the Hadhramaut the toughness of the beduin as well as a hardness of heart and lack of conscience that made them fit for any kind of work that brought material gain. No ocean could daunt these people who had never seen more water in their wadis than the roaring torrent of the happy years when Allah bestowed His blessing upon them. Water was treasure-trove to them. Wherever in deep places water from the rare *suyūl* (plural of *seil*, a water flood streaming through the usually dry wadis after rain in the mountains or on the plateaux) was left behind, there it was a source of

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jubilation. There youth swam and dived and unconsciously acquired the training that made desert boys useful navigators in the Arabian sailing craft or prepared them for earning their bread as pearl divers. The infinite vastness of the sea did not frighten them. On the vast rocky plateaux or amidst the rows of sand dunes that stretch farther than the eyes can see they knew the mere nothingness of man and were accustomed to being alone there with instinctive alertness and with a confidence founded on trust in God. The sea easily became familiar to the desert dweller. In the home-made sailing boats, much resembling our old East Indiamen, the Hadhramis had long ago dared to sail to East Africa and India. Soon they ventured further along the coast of India to Burma, Siam and Malacca until at last they reached the Archipelago of the Netherlands Indies where they penetrated from the northernmost point of Sumatra to the uttermost isles of the "Great East" of the days of the Dutch East India Company. Wherever they went they took, as a matter of course, their faith which was as strong as a rock and the conviction and vision that has assured to the Moslem a place of eminence in the eastern hemisphere. The greater part of their attention was doubtless directed to the acquisition of those treasures on earth that had been so totally lacking in their own poor desert wadis. Unhindered by any scruples they plunged into the struggle for material wealth with ability and innate toughness and paid little regard to considerations of honour and influence. Some of them acquired the latter with little difficulty if they were Seiyids, that is, direct descendants of the Prophet, a revered position in Islam.

Gradually a thin stream began to trickle back to the home country. Some of those who had succeeded in the great world overseas longed to go home and prepare themselves for the supreme moment of being buried in the sacred Arabian soil, far away from the noisy struggle for money and far away, too, from the crooked paths they had had to walk in order to acquire it. With them the riches of the outside world entered the immemorially unchanged Hadhramaut. They built there white places of worship as tokens of gratitude to Allah for the prosperity He had given them and perhaps a little also as an expiatory offering for the evil they had done in order to reap their earthly rewards. After the mosque came the houses, each more beautiful than the other. No longer did great tribal chiefs, beduin rulers and sultans alone have their fortresses and castles, now the moneyed aristocracy began to build beautiful dwelling-places. They bought, too, the protection of a beduin tribe, introduced hitherto unknown

The Inception of the Plan

weapons of terrible effect and brought the Hadhramaut which had long been forgotten into a new period of its age-old history.

These changes were not accomplished quietly nor were they completely digested within the rocky walls that fenced off the wadis and jōls (the rocky plateaux of Southern Arabia). The echo of conflicts and the clamour of internecine war spread to the East Indies where it was inevitable that the Netherlands Government should wish to be informed of the political conditions of the country from which a small but important group of its subjects had come and with which many were in regular contact.

This was the cause of my undertaking my first journey to the Hadhramaut which began in the middle of 1931 and has been described elsewhere.¹

This first journey led to my embarking on a second journey in 1939, when the principal aim was different but the final destination the same, namely, the most picturesque and probably the most remarkable part of the whole Arabian Peninsula—the Wadi Hadhramaut.

The plan to undertake this second journey arose from our failure to accomplish the last part of the first one. We had succeeded then in reaching the Hadhramaut valley, in seeing the towns of Shibām, Saiwūn and Tarīm and, after visiting and investigating superficially several important ruins, we had realized our highest hopes by reaching two places of outstanding interest in the country namely the tomb of Hūd, the Prophet of Allah, which was a religious shrine and a national place of pilgrimage, and that geographical mystery, the Bir Barahūt.

Good luck had attended us. It gave us the opportunity of meeting the outstanding Hadhrami of his day and secured for us his sympathy and assistance. He had opened up to us the way to the national sanctuary, a way that up to that moment had been closed to the foreigner. He had given us advice and provided facilities for the journey. He had even helped us to go to the much feared grotto or crater of Barahūt, which since the days of Ptolemy and Al Hamdāni had been wrapt in an impenetrable haze of tale and legend, mystery and awe.

Encouraged by such successes we had then decided to challenge fate by concluding our journey in an unusual manner. The hinterland of Aden which stretched from the southern end of the Red Sea coast along the Indian Ocean to the western border of the Hadhramaut was still largely

¹ *Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*, by D. van der Meuler and Dr. H. von Wissmann. Leyden, E. J. Brill, 1932.

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unknown. The tribes living in that remote and mountainous land had the reputation of being fanatically opposed to foreigners, rough, wild and warlike. From Aden England extended a protectorate over the hinterland, but her influence, and with it peace and security, had not penetrated far. Her officers had as yet had no order to explore its length and breadth. Attention had been restricted to some minor regions but as for the rest contact had been limited to making loose agreements with a number of petty sultans and tribal chiefs on a basis of financial allowances and gifts of arms and ammunition.

Our Hadhrani adviser and friend judged the plan to cross this hinterland to Aden a hazardous but not an impossible one. He gave us some ten letters of recommendation to beduin sheikhs through whose territory we should have to pass. He took the responsibility of sending the greater part of our luggage to Mukalla and urged us to take with us the absolute minimum of clothes, food and scientific instruments so that we might cross the insecure regions on swift camels.

How the attempt was made and, notwithstanding much toil and the overcoming of many obstacles, ended in failure has been described elsewhere. Tribes at war barred a passage through their territory and no *siyāras* (guides who are personally responsible for the safety of a caravan) dared to bring us through the war zones even if paid with gold. There was no end to evasive trekking and that drove us far from the direction of Aden. Exhausted bodily and mentally and hard pressed by shortage of food we had to abandon our plan and, in forced marches through the frontier zone between the Hadhramaut and the Aden hinterland, head straight southward to the Indian Ocean.

The plan was, however, not definitely shelved. It had possessed us day and night during weeks of the utmost exertion and exhaustion. We could not become reconciled to abandoning it after a first defeat. Hope at least did not fail us. We felt that once again in our lives might come a chance to reach this unexplored piece of Southern Arabia. We might then tackle the problem in a different way so that the war-lords of the Aden hinterland would not stop us. With that faint hope in our hearts, and our minds filled with memories of a great adventure well begun and all but successfully completed, we said good-bye in Aden, von Wissmann and I, at the end of our first journey to the Hadhramaut.

Then came the opportunity of continuing together this work of exploration, for which we had scarcely dared to hope. In March 1939, we

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met in Aden again to make the final preparations for the trip we had had to abandon in 1931.

A world war was at that time drawing menacingly near. That might make the execution of our plan difficult but not necessarily prevent it. As events proved we were able to undertake the journey and, with the help of God, to bring it to a successful conclusion. But on our return we had scarcely begun the classification of our accumulated data when our two countries became involved in war and all contacts were severed.

Our friendship, however, had been tempered in the fiery solitude of the rocks and deserts of the Aden hinterland. We knew what we had in each other, my old Hadhramaut companion, Prof. Dr. Hermann von Wissmann, and my new friend of this last trip, Dr. H. von Wasielewski, and myself. Herman's wife Dr. Bettina Von Wissman-Rinaldini completed the party and a brave and tenacious member of the team she was. No war could separate us totally and definitely. They would compile the maps and the other scientific data and I, after witnessing the sufferings of my people and of other nations, but seeing the hopeful end approaching, began at last to write down the story of our trip. The British who guide the Aden hinterland and the Hadhramaut to a new and better life will get from the hands of my companions a map, the first good and reliable map, of the territory through which we travelled. That map will, I know, be appreciated as the Hadhramaut map was appreciated. It will guide the men of the Royal Air Force safely over the country as they help in opening up a new period in its history. The other scientific data of a geographical, geological and botanical nature that were gathered, will also add a small contribution to the great task of mankind which is to populate and cultivate this world, to bring its peoples into closer contact with each other, and to lead backward nations from obscurity and ignorance to the light of civilization. And although the Western message of peace may at the present time have a false ring yet I am convinced that our small work of exploration in Southern Arabia will not in the end be nugatory but of service to that land and to its people.

A Difficult Start

OUR attempt to cross the stretch of country between Aden and the Wadi Hadhramaut would this time have to start in Aden. That, for me, was axiomatic. Once I had convinced my travelling companions of this essential fact (and it was easy to do so) then we should have to stick to our purpose with united tenacity and ingenuity. For it is not a simple matter to get into Arabia. From the earliest times two powers have opposed themselves to penetration: Arabia itself and its inhabitants. Later a third power was added, that of Great Britain. This last obstacle had to be carried here in Aden. The first two could only be approached after overcoming the third. The whole trip would be a stubborn, unyielding fight with the other two, a struggle in which we should have to persevere week after week. But the last barrier had to be cleared first.

It was not because we were foreigners that we had to face this difficulty. The British traveller has a harder fight and has often been in a weaker position than a foreigner supported by his Government. We had been fortunate in our earlier experiences. Our first Hadhramaut journey had passed off without any kind of opposition from the British authorities in Aden. So our concern would not have been great if British travellers coming after us in the Hadhramaut had not in spoken and written word repeatedly complained of the burdensome solicitude of their Government for the safety and well-being of its subjects. Had not we read and heard of Philby's many sharp indictments? Had not Freya Stark in several places in her books on the Hadhramaut described with irony the hampering care extended to her by the representatives of British Authority? Behind this attitude we suspected the jealous concern of the men who have the daily care of the protection of these countries, men who, because of political considerations, cannot travel there as freely as their hearts might desire, who often with patience and experience knit ties of mutual confidence and lay out the paths of educational influence, and who do not like to see this work of tact and perseverance harmed by people who may not entirely convince them that they will be good emissaries from the West.

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Many people have the blood of the explorer in their veins and an urge to be the first person to behold something new, to tread unknown tracks, to taste the joy of adding something to the knowledge of the world of science. The desire to safeguard protected regions from harmful curiosity, and to consider all requests for admittance into such regions with the consciousness of responsibility, had and has our full sympathy—at least when the decision lies in the hands of men of the standing of the Aden authorities.

We already knew that we should find again Sir Bernard Reilly as Governor. We had met him on our first trip together with his political adviser, Colonel Lake, the officer who had trekked on foot throughout the greater part of Aden hinterland, who had trained the first Arab soldiers, and who had become their friend and inspirer. That was enough to give us confidence in going to Aden although we knew that this time the granting of our request would be complicated by the additional obstacle of international tension. The expedition had been planned as a Dutch one, but of the two Dutch members one had been unable to join us and instead of one the German partners had become three. Thus only the initiative, direction and knowledge of the Arabic language were left as the Dutch share. The scientific study of the geography, geology and botany and the mapping of the regions through which we planned to travel would be the responsibility of the three Germans. Their chief was Professor von Wissmann, who was appreciated as a cartographer and geographer of Arabia and who generally inspired confidence. I hoped that in Aden trust and sympathy would serve to overcome the antipathy to Hitler and his Germany who were preparing for a struggle with Great Britain for world dominion. In that hope I was not mistaken and the many gloomy predictions I heard on this account did not come true.

Although we fully expected to win their consent we were none the less filled with gratitude when we realized that authority in Aden was in the hands of men who dared to give us their confidence and who even in those days of nervous tension still had the moral strength to trust us.

That is not to say that everything went off smoothly. There were many obstacles. But we found an unexpected helper without whose aid, extended to us spontaneously, the story that follows would probably have taken a different course.

Captain Hamilton was one of the new political officers and the man who was responsible for contacts with the tribes in that part of the Aden hinterland through which our route lay. The Dutch Consul in Aden

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thought it desirable to ask him to serve as intermediary for our introduction to the Governor. So there we stood on the day after my arrival in Aden (my German friends had arrived before me) in the office of this son of Lord Belhaven. The office was an untidy, crowded place, more suited for talking than for working. Arabs were coming and going, chiefs as well as common people. Some were presenting themselves as recruits for Hamilton's legion. Fine wild types they were with the tang of the wilderness about them mixed with the indigo of their never-washed clothes. Proud and unembarrassed men, who although outwardly solemn and calm, still filled the political officer's room with their noise and bustle. Captain Hamilton fitted in here, in this unordered hive. A place was found for us without anyone being sent away or ordered to keep quiet. Of chairs there were few so we made do with benches or corners of tables. Captain Hamilton had heard who we were and what we wanted and we were welcome to him. He was busy exploring his territory and prudently opening it up to the outside world. Thus we fitted into the plans in which he lived. He had recently returned from a trip on which he had intended to go through the Talh pass towards Nisāb. He had not managed to get through that famous natural barrier with a military column provided with machine-guns. He might have been able to force his way by fighting, but perhaps only then after sustaining serious losses. As he was not sure of the difficulties of the terrain or of the armed opposition which might still be ahead he had felt obliged to turn back to Aden. It was Captain Hamilton's opinion that now might be psychologically the most opportune moment for us to get through the barrier. The warriors of the Talh pass were convinced that a British punitive expedition would soon follow, so that it was possible that we, who were neither British nor soldiers, might be allowed to pass, in order not to increase unnecessarily the impending punishment. We should then be able to tell him of the geographical situation behind the Talh pass, and of the attitude of the tribes. Maps were produced that did not deserve the name, being sketches made from odd scraps of information and from conjecture. From the many bystanders men came forward who knew mountain roads and passes. A vague picture, but one that particularly took our fancy, was thus drawn. Captain Hamilton waxed enthusiastic and, from that very morning when we first made his acquaintance, became our sworn confederate.

His mediation with the Governor and with Colonel Lake was indispensable for both of them were under the influence of the set-back that

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Hamilton and his column had received. That set-back pointed to the presence of courageous men with wills strongly determined to oppose. If a well-equipped military group had been forced to retire, how could we hope to get through? Such was the logical objection of the Governor to our plans.

"You must not start in Aden," he said, "but at the other end, in the Hadhramaut, where Ingrams has made great strides in the pacification of the tribes. He will be able to give you useful introductions to places where he judges you will have a reasonable chance of penetrating. I could not take the responsibility *vis-à-vis* your respective governments of letting you run into serious trouble."

So spoke the man with the longest experience in these countries, Sir Bernard Reilly. And it seemed as if he were right. But we were convinced that the most difficult part had to be done first and should not be left until we had exhausted more than half of our provisions, money and energy. We drew the Governor's attention to the fact that we were neither military men nor British, and that a retreat could be carried out by us without any loss of prestige or military honour. We could negotiate, we could avoid any tribal region that presented difficulty; our small party would give rise to no fear or suspicion since we were no part of the Aden Government that could take away prerogatives or inflict punishments for tribal wars. Also the Netherlands Government would never think of calling British authorities to account for having given us permission to penetrate into dangerous, unpacified territory. We knew the dangers and would ourselves assume complete responsibility. That removed the last objections of Sir Bernard Reilly. At his request a declaration of our point of view was put in writing and signed by von Wissmann and me. This done, we only needed the permission of the military commander, Air Commodore G. R. M. Reid. Sir Bernard himself asked for it by telephone, explaining our case. We heard him say: "They are experienced Arabian travellers who have given proof on earlier trips that they move carefully and tactfully through unexplored country." Even more flattering descriptions seemed to fail to convince the man at the other end and we were asked to go ourselves to Air Headquarters.

Some explorers of South-West Arabia seem to have got into trouble some years ago and then to have asked by radio for an R.A.F. plane to fetch them out of the wilds. Freya Stark was picked up from the interior by the R.A.F. and brought back to Aden in safety. In normal times

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such rescues were possible though unwelcome. Now however when a war with Germany was an increasing menace not one plane could be diverted from its military duties. By signing a declaration that even in the event of serious danger we would not ask for help from the R.A.F. we were able to overcome the Air Commodore's opposition.

It was not unjust that these declarations should be demanded of us. We must shoulder complete responsibility for what we were going to do. British rulers in the menacing year of 1939 could not and should not have been burdened with anything more than giving us the opportunity to carry out our intended work of exploration and we had no right to any protection in regions that were not yet pacified. The fact that more than a hundred years after the occupation of Aden the Pax Britannica did not penetrate inland will receive more attention when we come to describe the situation we actually found there.

While we were grateful for the results obtained from these discussions we were also surprised to find the British authorities apparently so convinced of the danger we should find in trekking through the country between Aden and the Hadhramaut. We had been of the opinion that much patience would be required, that there would be tiring negotiations, the payment of tolls and perhaps much physical exertion and hardship, but that the days when one's life was in danger had for many years been a thing of the past thanks to the shadow of the ubiquitous British power. We had been strengthened in that opinion by the reproaches directed at us by Ingrams, the peacemaker of the Hadhramaut, who in several of his publications mentioned that we spoke of dangers incurred in the Hadhramaut in 1931 (which was before the increase in British administration there) when in reality such dangers did not exist.

Yet, eight years later, for territory much nearer the British centre of administration those dangers were deemed so real that the discussion I have mentioned had to take place and we had to sign written declarations certifying that we were fully aware of the risks we were about to run and would take upon ourselves all responsibility for the consequences. This gave us, on the evening following our talks, a feeling of tension and expectancy. Was this going to be more dangerous than our former trip and had we been reckless in discharging the British authorities so quickly of their responsibility and in forgoing our only possibility of help and assistance? Our desire to get clear of the initial stumbling-block had made us act

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without hesitation and it was therefore with relief and joy that we started at once to make our detailed preparations.

Captain Hamilton viewed the result we had obtained as a personal success. He had given us his confidence without knowing much about us. We responded by including him in our preparations as if he had been a member of the expedition.

Captain Hamilton lived with his Arab troops at Sheikh 'O:hmān, some twelve miles from Aden, in an old house surrounded by date palms. Outside the mud wall that encircled the garden was the hot desert with its blinding sunlight. Inside were the shade of the palms and the lively disorder of the soldiers' camp run on patriarchal lines. Here the captain was the trusted leader, the older and respected friend. They were no ordinary soldiers that he moulded there. His was a legion of picked troops, all volunteers carefully chosen from free, proud men of the desert. They would not sacrifice their pride nor their love of liberty by becoming ordinary soldiers. The British authorities had understood, thanks to the advice of men like Colonel Lake, that very special officers were required to make soldiers, and a quite unusual type of soldier, of these men. They also agreed that the officers who were to train these Arab troops must be given great liberty in their methods. On this basis some really extraordinary contingents had been created. One aim had been to get men of a good type, representing all the influential tribes of the hinterland, included in the ranks of these select troops. The number of men who came to enlist was much bigger than the total strength required. Thus it was possible to choose carefully and in the choice the troops had their say. When eventually the ranks of Captain Hamilton's picked troops and of those of his colleagues (for other similar bands were recruited under other officers) were filled all were very proud of the result. The men had picturesque but very practical uniforms and were armed as infantry. The few mounted elements came from the other side of the sea for there are no horses in this part of Arabia. Somalis thus formed the cavalry. The Arab has no race or colour prejudice and so their darker brethren from Africa were sympathetically received in this community of soldiers.

We made the acquaintance of Captain Hamilton's Arab staff at a simple Arab meal where the composition of the soldier escort that was to be given to us was discussed. Captain Hamilton had from the very beginning been convinced that we should require a small military escort. When we discovered that his soldiers were at the same time outstanding members of

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their respective tribes and were being trained for purposes of pacification and liaison rather than for exclusively military duty our initial antipathy to his suggestion disappeared. We soon agreed about the leader. He would be the cautious Muhsin al 'Aulaqi, one of the older men with the rank of *ja'ush* (sergeant). He was called to join in the discussion. He accepted gladly and as the others were being chosen we discovered that attachment to our expedition was looked upon as both attractive and honourable. Our men would have the chance of passing through their own tribal territory and so see their families and friends again. They would trek through unknown country of which they had heard many stories and later would be able to tell their comrades. Of the Hadhramaut in particular there had been much talk of late and it was stimulating to the men to learn that our goal was that far-away, far-famed wadi.

In front of the house "Ham's" soldiers assembled, grouped according to their respective tribes and there Muhsin started to pick out his men. He choose too many. Seven was fixed as the maximum he was allowed to take and after much wrangling and ordering to and fro all agreed and Captain Hamilton concurred in those who would form the team. Finally Hamilton's own cook was added to them, a diminutive, clever-looking Yemeni with a curly head of hair who at once felt he had been raised to the rank of a soldier and started to look about for a rifle. Captain Hamilton considered it inadvisable that we ourselves should travel without any fire-arms and so he procured for us some service revolvers and ammunition.

There was a motley gathering, representatives of many tribes, in the palm garden and the neglected old house but amidst the untidy bustle of the Arab soldiers we soon felt as one of them. The Somali mounted men excepted, all were Arabs. One could see quite clearly that along the coasts and around Aden there had been much mixing with slaves and other races of African origin. But the men from the tribes in the interior had pure, sharp Semitic profiles. Childlike mirth and lightheartedness surrounded one here on every side. Freed from the concern of providing their daily bread the men practised together here the attractive sport of making war.

While we were busily taking photographs of the most typical representatives of the South-West Arabian tribes an alarm sounded. Information had just been brought in that a notorious tribe on the coast at a distance of about fifty miles from Aden had attacked a detachment of soldiers and injured some of them. Orders were quickly passed, some of the men ran off to fetch their arms and ammunition, others dragged a machine-gun

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along while still others filled water bottles. In less than a quarter of an hour a number of lorries and small touring cars turned into the garden. On the top of some of the cars signalling flags had been fastened so that should R.A.F. assistance be required it would, with the help of the flags, be easy for the pilots to spot the cars in the field. Hurriedly all the gear was loaded, the men took their places inside and on top of the trucks, the gate was swung open and with songs and cries of joy they were on their way. They sang the familiar warrior songs of the mountains pitching them in high falsetto tones to the quick tempo of dancing feet interrupting themselves now and then with long shrill trillings in the throat, the *zaghārīt*, that is specially identified throughout the Arabic world with women with whom it is popular as an expression of joy and welcome. Is a life of manly adventure so very attractive? Here one could really believe it.

In the course of our journey we should see much of the men of the escort picked out for us here. By the end of the trip we should know the value of each of them and the contribution of each to its success. We would not then forget that it was Captain Hamilton who had picked them out, trained them and made them what they were. In only one of them was he deceived and that one was the part-time soldier, his cook.

The few days we had left to us in Aden were crowded with final preparations which we completed in a mood of subdued elation. Our biggest care had been taken from us: we were going to start at the right end, at Aden. Our escort was thrilled at the prospect of seeing the Hadhramaut, the land of whose riches, palaces and wadis they had heard so much in recent years. They were going to see it and to travel through it with us. We ourselves knew that we were going to see again many friends in Hadhramaut towns and that we were assured of a hospitable reception. We pictured to ourselves their surprise and their eager questioning how this time we had managed to reach their country; then their recalling that on our taking leave eight years ago we had said that we should come back, God willing. Their astonishment would be the reward that awaited the accomplishment of the first and most difficult part of our plan.

We received great help and encouragement in Aden from one other remarkable man, a friend of all explorers, himself a pioneer in commerce in South-West Arabia and on the other side of the Red Sea, a man who had repeatedly given proof of initiative and boldness in starting new ventures. This was Antonin Besse, "the great A.B.", as Freya Stark¹

¹ *The Southern Gates of Arabia*. London. John Murray.

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calls him. Mr. Besse had not contented himself with establishing business houses in these countries, he had organized coastal shipping services with small but practical motor vessels in this out-of-the-way part of the world. He had done more: he had bought aeroplanes, engaged pilots and projected and explored new air trade routes. He was a man who understood us and we him. He and his wife were old hands at studying the vast literature dealing with Arabian countries. Coupled with a personal experience that extended over many years they had acquired a knowledge of these countries and peoples and of their stormy history during the last few decades which we admired and envied. Films of the coastal route to Mukalla and from there to the Wadi Hadhramaut, taken from one of Besse's own planes, gave us a picture of the shapes and forms of mountain ranges and great plateaux, of rows of extinct craters and other wonders which we expected to find but of which we had as yet no certain knowledge. Besse, during his busy lifetime, had tried to carry out many bold schemes. Some he had had to abandon. Such was the fate of his project for an air service with Aden as a centre. Subsidies from the governments interested in his plans, on which he had counted, did not materialize. The difficulty of ensuring a supply of good pilots proved insurmountable. Other and later men may be able to realize the plans that Besse has outlined and explored. In South-West Arabia the aeroplane is the ideal means of transport and communication. Great Britain provided the proof of that when she placed these territories under the military command of the Royal Air Force.

We were given a glimpse of this work of the Royal Air Force during a visit we paid to Air Headquarters. Von Wissmann's map of the Hadhramaut¹ had been put to good use in the aerial reconnaissance of the country. And just as we got much help for our first South Arabia trip from Flight-Lieutenant Rickards who put at von Wissmann's disposal his air photographs, sketches and data so now again we found Royal Air Force men who were interested in our plans and could show us pictures of some parts of our proposed route. Great as is the importance of such photos to those who have to trek through unknown lands their worth is even more to him who has to map them. The aerial photograph lifts the traveller above the strip of country that has been the narrow limit of vision of his caravan even if he has been able to fit that strip into a wider setting by climbing to the tops of the hills he passes. Suppositions which we had made about the formation of mountain ranges and plateaux had suddenly

¹ *Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*. Leyden. E. J. Brill, 1932.

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to give place to the far different certainties shewn us in these beautiful photographs. We felt it unfortunate that for the particular route we had in mind only a restricted number of photographs were available. Many, however, could be shown of the Hadhramaut. That country had received special attention of late and to pacify it several punitive expeditions of the Royal Air Force had been necessary. We saw here in a series of photographs the extensive preparations that had preceded such expeditions. First settlements in rebellious areas were photographed and then warnings dropped. If these had no effect, the places to be bombed and the date of the bombing were announced to the inhabitants. If all this did not bring the rebellious tribe to submission bombs were dropped until pieces of white cloth were spread out on the ground to indicate surrender. In this way the Hadhramaut, once notorious for its unending internecine wars, had been pacified with the loss of only a very small number of human lives.

At the Royal Air Force Headquarters in Aden we saw in these aerial photographs the history of this modern method of extending the Pax Britannica over an important part of Arabia. When writing of the new Hadhramaut we shall return to this work which is performed without fuss, is applauded over the whole of the hinterland of Aden and the extension of which is earnestly desired by all who have a real knowledge of the conditions existing there.

* * * * *

Once permission had been given us to make our trip with Aden as starting-point we quickly packed the luggage necessary for a caravan journey of at least one month and bought provisions for ourselves and for our escort.

The first 140 miles could be made by lorry travelling mostly along the beach of Arabia's southern coast. Our whole company, luggage and all, could be stowed on one lorry. So negotiations for the hire of a good car were started. Eighty rupees proved to be the normal cost of this trip but the driver who was recommended to us asked 300 rupees. On investigation we found that in this amount was included a toll which the Sultan of Shuqra imposed on all travellers by car in his territory. The driver was then informed that officials were exempted from this charge and that we and our escort belonged to that category. The driver did not agree and no other car-owner would take us at a lower price for fear of the Sultan's wrath if the toll was not paid. We complained to Colonel Lake and in our presence the representative of the Sultan of Shuqra received a severe

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lesson. The end of the story was that Captain Hamilton sent us one of his lorries and a little later Colonel Lake sent us a driver with a letter asking us to engage him. The man had been ordered to take us for the sum of ninety rupees to the end of the motor road which was about twelve miles beyond Shuqra, the Aden Government offering to pay half of this amount as cost of transport for the military escort. The driver thus started off in the direction of Shuqra, still in fear and trembling of the Sultan who, thanks to this British intervention, would not make any money out of our passing through his territory.

For political officers such as Lake and Hamilton this preliminary to our expedition was a humiliating proof of the unruliness of the sultans, robbers in modern style, in their own domains. Both Hamilton and Lake had asked us to break with the fatal old habit in the Aden hinterland of paying high prices for a safe conduct through the lands of these brigands. We should have failed right at the start and the Sultan of Shuqra would have forced us to pay toll had we not been backed by Colonel Lake's personal authority.

Everything was now ready for our departure. The luggage was divided into bundles that would be easy to handle or to fasten to a camel's back. We carried between us the camera, canvas bags for collecting plants, poison flasks for killing insects, mapping instruments, diaries and sketch-books. The money for the journey, consisting of four bags of heavy Maria Theresa dollars, was distributed among the pieces of luggage thus diminishing risk of our losing all at once. This time again we travelled without a tent, putting our trust in the scarcity of rain in the country and hoping to find sufficient shelter against the heat of the sun when halting during the day. For the first time we had, in addition to our Arabian water-bags of goat-skin, canvas bags such as are used by Americans and the British. Further, remembering our former hard sleeping on the merciless rocks, we had permitted ourselves the luxury of rubber mattresses that could be blown up and, although they were heavy, took up little space. From those mattresses we also hoped for protection against the cold when sleeping on the high, wind-swept jōls. The cold of the penetrating desert blasts would be kept away from our bodies by commodious rubber wraps with hoods under which we could be hidden from top to toe, blanket and all. Our medical equipment, consisting mostly of dressings and patent medicines, was plentiful, thanks largely to products, which we much appreciated, of the famous firm of Bayer. Other manufacturers made it possible for us

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to add to our luggage a rich stock of small articles for distribution as gifts. On this occasion our provision chest was bigger and better-stocked than on our previous trip. Experience had taught us that striking camp before sunrise, which means in pitch darkness, could be much delayed by our Western habit of taking a hot breakfast. The Arab is more frugal; he only eats after having covered a good part of the day's march. So we had decided to try and do without the time-wasting business of cooking a breakfast. Instead, we would stuff our pockets with bars of compressed porridge, ready for use, and cubes of concentrated nuts and fruits. The latter proved to be delicious but the chewing of the dried porridge, as hard as stone, was revolting. For evening meals in camp we had compressed bars of different kinds of soup and cubes of beef-tea and meat-extract. They were light, took up little space and gave taste and flavour to many a dull brew. Our provision of drinks consisted of a pint of brandy and some tins of tea and milk-powder. For the rest, and that means principally, we would eat what our soldier-cook prepared for the caravan from his Arab menu.

The luggage was loaded on the two-ton lorry on Friday morning, March 24th 1939, in front of our hotel in Aden. Friday is in Moslem eyes an auspicious day for starting on a long journey and we had no fear of superstitious Western objections. We took our place with the men of our escort in the small space that was left on top of the luggage and thus the adventure that would join our fates together for the next two months could begin.

The Indigo Warriors

THE faithful were preparing to go to the *masjid* and perform the Friday *salāt* as we left Steamer Point, which the Arabs call Tawāyih, the harbour and shipping centre where, up to recent times, the military establishments were concentrated. The road leads for some miles along the harbour front and then turns left to the isthmus which connects the small peninsula of Aden with the mainland of Arabia. The main settlement of Aden is built against barren rocky flanks and partly within the extinct crater that lies amidst those rocks. It is a natural fortress and has been known and used as such since the days of antiquity. A wall built high on top of steeply-sloping rocky ridges protected the town on the side of the isthmus against the attacks of marauding bands from Arabia. The old harbour that was situated in front of this settlement, which the English call Crater but which was the original Aden and is still called such by the Arabs, was safeguarded against sea attack by fortresses built on top of the sharp-pointed rocks of the vicinity.

The British conquered this town a little more than a century ago and turned it into a second Gibraltar. The southern approaches to the Red Sea and the sea route to India are guarded by it. The men who ruled in Aden were first of all preoccupied with the strengthening and safety of the Empire. Aden had to be strong and able to defend itself on all sides. During the first world war it fulfilled that task except once when it was attacked from an unexpected direction. The Turks came down from the highlands of the Yemen where they had settled long before the British took Aden and in a strong and well prepared attack overran Sheikh 'Othmān and became a serious menace to Aden itself. Clearly the town had been inadequately protected on the landward side.

Aden's task of being a fortress to protect Great Britain's sea-ways helped to make it self-sufficiently British and caused its rulers to overlook the responsibility they had for the Arabian hinterland. The menace of foreign interference in South-West Arabia in recent years however forced the British to pay closer attention to this land of which the easternmost terri-

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tory, the Hadhramaut, has of late received most attention. The Sultanates closer to Aden are only beginning to temper their unruly independence. They do not yet know that time is running out for the old way of life, the days of their tyranny, reminiscent of that of the knights and princes in the middle ages, of their enslavement of the peasantry, of robbery and pillage by their mercenaries and of bloodfeuds and insecurity. We were soon to have proof that we had entered an area with social and political conditions such as we had not deemed possible to exist so close to the British stronghold of Aden.

Aden the aloof was only now beginning to show serious concern for the needs that were becoming audible in these so-called protected countries and to realize that non-interference was not the same as respect for the independence of free Arab peoples but meant rather evasion of a task which as a world-power Britain accepted elsewhere but had left untouched so far as these orderless lands were concerned.

We had scarcely left the thoroughly British atmosphere of the Aden peninsula and crossed the isthmus, now taken up with aerodromes, wireless stations and military camps, to the south coast of Arabia before we felt ourselves in a completely different world. The crowded British base lay behind us and our car sped along the flat, wide beach, frightening away whole flocks of gulls and quickly penetrating into mysterious Arabia. In the lorry where, squatting uneasily, we hung on to our luggage the joy at this speedy progress right into Arabia was so great that it could not be contained within that narrow space. Our escort broke into song that rose in bursts above the noise of the motor and made the few lonely travellers we passed stare up in astonishment from their camels or donkeys at our mixed company. When the singing had restored equilibrium in their excited souls and the men had fallen silent "Wasi", which was the name the escort gave to von Wissmann's assistant Dr. Hans von Wasielewski, dug out a mouth-organ from one of his pockets and followed the beduin songs with some Western melodies that were generally appreciated.

The lorry followed the beach for forty miles. Here and there a solitary fisherman was busy with net and *hūri* (a small canoe made from a hollowed out tree-trunk), some caravans passed us on their way to Aden with firewood, others we overtook as they headed towards the interior loaded with flour, sugar and piece goods. Further on we met many gulls, sometimes a small group of flamingoes which, as they flew away, opened up the

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beauty of their black-striped, red wings and occasionally a lonely sea-eagle perched on a dead tree-stump or a piece of wreckage. As the end of our swift ride along the beach drew near we saw the driver looking out for a suitable place to turn inland. When he thought he had found it he turned due North so as to cross the belt of sand dunes by the shortest way. Although the attempt was made at top speed the truck soon became bogged in the soft, white sand. We all got out. The driver released half the air from the tires in order to widen the tread and thus get a broader grip on the ground; then branches of bushes were cut and stowed in the deep ruts in front of the wheels. We all lent a helping hand and the lorry pulled clear. Up hill down dale the lorry slowly conquered the belt of sand dunes. If the dunes had been higher we might have been on the North Sea coast of Holland. After the dunes came the difficulty of dry sandy beds where, after the rains, the various branches of the seil find a way out to the sea. We crossed them, thanks to our united efforts, and then came to cultivated fields. Here lived people who had cows, sheep and goats and who, after rain or when the wadis brought down water from the mountains in the interior, grew several kinds of cereals in the fields that were now covered with dry stalks. The long, stout stalks of the dhura had been set together in big bunches resembling from a distance a village of *tūkuls* (round reed huts). We reached the Wadi Sammak where we saw Al Ka'ud, the first hamlet we had met with since leaving Aden, and then passed to the wide Wadi Bāna.

Here we found the pleasant village of Zanjubār the name of which made us think of ancient slave trading contacts with the African Zanzibar. We then crossed several wide sandy wadis with considerable difficulty. On both sides fields that could be cultivated alternated with stretches of sand where bushes and acacias offered good browsing to goats and camels. The direction in which we moved had become eastward again as soon as we had crossed the belt of dunes. We drove parallel to the coast and had occasional glimpses of the sea. As we approached Shuqra the mountains closed in on the coast and a steep wall of brownish rock shut off the narrow coastal strip to the north-west. Strong winds had piled up the white desert sand against the foot of the rocks.

We were now nearing Shuqra, the coastal village where the ruler of the Fadhli Sultanate lived. We knew that the British had made a landing-ground there and when we crossed a very flat and completely barren piece of land we thought that we had reached the aerodrome. But we looked

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in vain for the usual recognition marks that are made on the corners and in the centre with white stones or chalk. The real landing-ground proved to be farther away, between Shuqra and the mountains.

The residence of the Sulran now came into view. In the distance and contrasted with the green-blue sea the village looked picturesque; close to, it proved to be a poor, dirty and neglected place. That was even the case with the Sultan's little palace. Some distance away from the village in the middle of the plain, stood a white building which was a new house for the Sultan. His village or townlet, an old pirates' nest, was now connected with Aden by a track practicable for strong cars. The advent of the motor-car had secured for him new revenues in tolls but had also placed on him the obligation to maintain a more Sultan-like state. This was the reason for the building of the new little palace. He had also bought a light-grey Ford with deep-red leather upholstery and we beheld the sultan sitting in that ultra-modern vehicle of luxury driving slowly from the new palace in our direction. We stopped our lorry on the plain in front of the village and waited respectfully.

The Sultan's failure to hire us a car for 300 rupees, owing to British intervention, could not have put him in a very friendly mood towards us. For that reason, and in order not to give him fresh grounds for vexation, it seemed advisable to get away from him as soon as possible. We therefore awaited the approach of the Sultan with some uneasiness. He himself drove the car. Its red cushions made a fine background for this indigo-blue prince: the habits of the country had not yet been brushed aside by the advent of the motor-car. His nearly black turban was shiny and stiff thanks to the abundance of indigo applied to it. The robust, naked upper part of his body shone with indigo. His loincloth was saturated with the same dye that is proof of wealth and of sturdy nationalistic taste, that fortifies the skin and is a defence against disease and darkens the colour of the skin to a negro tinge. On top of the Sultan's loincloth was wound a multi-coloured scarf; over that was a cartridge belt and in front of the body was a short, broad, curved, silver sheath out of which stuck the massive silver handle of a jambiya (curved dagger). A proud, muscular warrior; fine to look at. Our escort and driver were immediately impressed by his appearance and one after the other went up to him respectfully to kiss his nonchalantly outstretched hand. In the meantime the Sultan's shrewd eyes turned inquiringly in our direction. He asked Muhsin, the leader of our escort, who we were and what we were going to do. Muhsin did

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not yet know that himself and answered: "They have come to look at the country, to photograph and to draw it." The Sultan did not believe that.

"Of course they have come to search for gold or oil," he said. I then went up to him and explained what we were going to do.

"Where are you travelling to?"

"To the Hadhramaut."

He did not believe me but wished to know more and gave us a half-hearted invitation to be his guests. To the obvious disappointment of our soldiers, who liked to be in inhabited places, I politely but firmly declined this offer. The lorry would have to carry us that same evening as far as the road would take us and we hoped to be able to continue our journey by caravan early next morning. We should be very grateful for any help that would ensure our getting camels in time.

The Sultan drove back to his old palace in Shuqra and we began bargaining with the people who had gathered round us about the camels which were to be brought to the end of the motor road before sunrise next morning. We offered a good price if they were there in time. While we were talking the sun set. At the village well we replenished our store of water, then climbed back into the lorry and drove off in the gathering darkness, due North, to the foot of the mountains. First we passed the real landing-ground. Then the road began to climb towards a wild, lava-covered area (one of those known all over Arabia as harras), consisting of black fields strewn with sharp pieces of rock. It was a very recent innovation for lorries to go several miles into these rugged hills and a proof of Aden's growing concern for its hinterland.

It had been possible to convince the Sultan that the construction of this road would not be to his detriment but on the contrary would further his interests. For that reason the Government had let him make the road in his own primitive way. British engineers had first fixed the alignment and then the Sultan had taken over responsibility for clearing the track, paying his labourers from funds received from Aden. He was told that he would be allowed to impose tolls on motor cars passing with passengers and freight. This greatly encouraged work on the road.

We found it impossible in the pitch-darkness to advance normally on this primitive, rocky track that zigzagged steeply up the mountain-side. Our engine stalled repeatedly and the lorry started rolling backwards. Then we all had to jump off and try to put big stones behind the wheels.

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It was an exciting and very tiring job and in four hours we advanced only twelve miles. We had however by then reached the top of the Hait al-Arqūb. There the lava field was less barbaric in appearance and there were some smooth flat places wide enough for us to spread our mattresses after having cleared away the loose stones. Everyone gave a hand in unloading the luggage and in unpacking what was required for eating and sleeping. At first it was difficult to find what we wanted but our packing improved with practice. Meanwhile our electric torches proved invaluable in the dark. In a short time our camp was pitched. Some of the men had been able to find firewood and soon a big fire was burning, lighting up fantastically the busy disorder. The camping atmosphere became completely convincing when the first round of bread lay hissing in the frying-pan and its smell united us in a general feeling of happy anticipation. It is a pity that in camp one is never free to enjoy its comforts immediately. However tired one may be from the day's work there is always much to do before one can rest. The most difficult part must be tackled first. It consists of sorting, registering and packing the haul of plants, insects, butterflies and specimens of stones. Each produces his plant-bag and spirit flask, invariably crammed full, and empties his pockets of stones, fossils and the like. If there is no wind this is not a disagreeable task. But when the night breezes blow, as is usually the case in these barren regions, what a chase ensues with disappearing sheets of blotting paper for drying plants and pieces of paper for naming and dating them! Photography, too, calls for much work every evening. Exposed films have to be given dates and place-names and stored away carefully and fresh films prepared for use next day. Notes have to be brought up to date, information received during the day verified and entered in the diary. All this has to be rounded off by blowing up the mattresses and taking shelter behind pieces of luggage for protection during the night against the usually strong wind.

But in these activities the evening meal brought a welcome pause. The heavy chupatties fried in sesame oil and a finger thick were generally so hot that at first we could not touch them with our hands. These evening meals were the best part of the nights in camp. Everybody then was in a happy mood and well-disposed to straighten out any misunderstandings and quarrels that had arisen during the heat and the strenuous going of the day. Round the camp fire, with a burning-hot dish on one's knees, was a good place to re-establish solidarity and good-will and with a joke to reduce to their true trifling dimensions those things that had caused momentary

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dislike or displeasure during the day. Here the differences of race and standing were forgotten; here, sitting together within the circle of light, we were united as comrades while outside the wilderness was around us and loneliness and danger for the man who was alone. Faithful comradeship would serve to overcome all difficulties. The good leader therefore uses the communal meals of the camp-fire at night to fortify the unity of his caravan and to avert any ruptures that may threaten.

On the *Hait al-Arquḥ* the unity of our party was not yet genuine and complete. Our beduin had not yet joined us, the smell of civilization still radiated from the lorry and the driver did not care for this camp life. Soon we should have the penetrating smell of camels around us and sticking to us. Low, gurgling sounds coming from the depth of a yard and a half of a camel's neck would be heard from the darkness surrounding the camp and the deep sighs of the animals as they interrupted their regular mastication.

The camp on the *Hait al-Arquḥ* was between 1,400 and 1,700 feet above sea level. At sunrise next morning we found that *Shuqra* was still visible in the distance, close to the sea. This sight of *Shuqra* was essential for von Wissmann who now began his map-making and who could take the bearings of the place, the length and breadth of which had been fixed on good British sea-charts. Von Wissmann and von Wasielewski climbed a mountain-top and from there took bearings of the chief peaks visible and of other landmarks which they sketched in their route-book. Then we were ready to start.

We went on in the lorry up to the end of the road. There a group of Arab workmen supervised by a soldier of the Sultan of *Shuqra* were toiling at a further inroad of the West into this part of Arabia. They rested during the hottest hours of the day and we were fortunate in finding shelter in the hut of the foreman from the fierce heat of the sun to which we were not yet accustomed. The man who had contracted with us in *Shuqra* to procure camels soon arrived to report. He had seven animals, one riding-camel for Frau von Wissmann and the rest for the transport of the luggage.

Loading for the first time is always difficult. With great care and after much disputing among the camel leaders the loads were selected and then tied on to the plaintively protesting animals. On such occasions the less one interferes the better for one's peace of mind if, that is, one can spare the time to let the beduins swear and fight the matter out between themselves. Many times, however, we were obliged to concern ourselves

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very deeply with the question of loading so as to prevent a much belated start and to safeguard cases with valuable contents such as drying plants and photographic material from being packed together with sweating and leaking water-skins.

The camels in the first place and their leaders in the second place would be our daily concern in the weeks to come. Complaining about both, but especially about the latter, would become a nearly uncontrollable inclination. And yet it would be of the greatest importance for the success of the expedition to maintain with the camelmén good relations based on strictness combined with cordiality and democratic comradeship. If we could keep one another in a happy frame of mind and learn to like each other then setbacks and fatigue would be easily overcome. We had to realize that in the eyes of the beduin of our caravan we were difficult and inscrutable strangers who acted in flagrant contradiction of all the rules of caravan behaviour. Instead of travelling at night-time during the hot season we did everything during the day so that we might be able to see, map and photograph the country. Our times of resting were not beduin times and the sites we chose were not calculated to find the best browsing for camels. Many were our misunderstandings and the beduins, we found, were used to being their own lords and masters. They had never learned to obey and for foreigners who gave the impression of serving no God and who evidently did not perform the *salât* they had no respect. An additional difficulty was that we were obliged often to change camels and, of course, their leaders as well. So that every now and then we had to try to understand fresh people and make our manners acceptable to them. The trouble we took with them usually brought its own reward.

On the first day of trekking one generally does not travel far: the loads have to be rearranged and more securely tied. The distance to our second camp at Bir Lamas was not great and the path towards it presented no difficulty. The ranges of rocky hills and the sharp lava-stones were behind us; no more steep slopes but a slightly undulating country with alternate stony and sandy stretches lay ahead. When we started, soon after midday, it was still very hot but there was a breeze and the air was very dry. We walked with a light tread of satisfaction at the auspicious beginning to the trip. The camels silently placed the callous cushions of their feet on rock or sand. Only the loads groaned, the cords straining and creaking. The beduin walked alongside their animals with enquiring looks at the regularly-swinging loads. The road-workers and the lorry, the last signs of Western

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penetration into the country, passed out of sight. Around us were age-old, rocky mountains, their flanks eternally swept by the wind and scoured by the sand. The difference between day and night temperatures had caused some boulders to burst and to fall to pieces. As far as the eye could see the aspect of this land did not change. The air above the mountains and sand dunes quivered and made their shapes unreal. Everything in the distance was hazy and enlarged: bunches of hard, desert grass became like bushes and bushes assumed the size of trees. It was a silent world where the wind made only the tamarisks rustle; the other bushes and dwarf trees, hard and dry and often with long thorns, did not respond in melody to the breeze. Animals were scarce. When they appeared they rarely escaped the watchful, sharp eyes of the beduin and soldiers and if edible, according to beduin tastes, they were hunted relentlessly. Animals were going to be few and would provide a much valued diversion in our monotonous trekking.

The vegetation was richer than we had expected; approaching the Wadi Lamas it even became so varied that cows could find enough bushes and little tufts of grass to browse on. The appearance of a herd of whitish-grey cows showed that we were nearing inhabited places.

The Wadi Lamas was dry and its bed profusely covered with bushes. Its walls became higher and steeper as we walked on. Suddenly we were startled by a rifle-shot the sound of which reverberated in many echoes. Unexpected difficulties? we asked ourselves. Looking up in the direction from which the shot had come we saw on an edge high up on a perpendicular part of the rocky wadi wall a number of young *wubar* (plural of *wabar*) running for their life and disappearing into fissures in the wall. With the cry of "wubar!" the soldiers ran to the side of the wadi and started to climb. One reached the edge and found bloodstains but the wounded *wabar* itself was irretrievable. Darkness fell and it was high time to stop the search and move on to a camping-place without this addition to our evening meal.

We soon found a spot that pleased the beduin but did not suit us at all. The camels were unloaded close by the wells of Bir Lamas; we ourselves spread our mattresses as far away as possible in the sandy, pebbly bed of the wadi. Here caravans had camped so often that the soil all around the well was alive with camel-ticks. They, it is true, do not prefer human blood but they content themselves with it when that of camels is lacking. In the light of an electric torch we saw them making their way towards us and soon crawling up our legs. They tried to go up higher searching for some

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soft spot on to which they could fasten, dig deeply in to the skin and suck themselves full of blood until they grew to the shape of a big pea. We had then to pull hard to get them off and for days afterwards a blue-red spot marked the place where they had fed. They do not cause itching but a faint tickling. I have never heard they transmit infections or diseases but to us who have lost the habit of harbouring parasites they were revolting. Fortunately this vermin which in external appearance much resembles the house-bug does not penetrate a woollen blanket or climb the rubber of an inflated mattress.

But on this night there was much to be done before we could think of seeking safety and oblivion in sleep. As soon as our camp fires flared up at Bir Lamas we felt in the surrounding darkness the presence of people who had been attracted by the flames and by the noise of our activity. They were not visible to us but the soldiers heard them and spied them out in the dark. One soldier took a flaming brand from the fire and lifted it up high so as to illuminate a wide circle. Immediately the mysterious lookers-on came forward offering their services in anticipation of being allowed to join, later on, in the meal or to take away some of the remains which for them would be an unexpected treat.

The Sheikh of the territory where we were camping also came to visit us. He did not make his appearance as a beggar but as a man of authority, armed with rifle, cartridge-belt and dagger and accompanied by some armed followers. He was not cordial but came with claims, angling to see how much money he could get out of us. So he struck an indignant note and played the part of one who had been wronged. We had penetrated his territory without his permission. That was not true. We had the consent of the Sultan of Shuqra whose authority was said to stretch as far as Bir Lamas. A lengthy palaver followed. To us it was a first lesson on how to travel in these countries without being fleeced and hindered too much. The Sheikh tried to squeeze out of us a toll for free passage. Our answer was that the Hukūma (Government, that is the British authorities) had assured us that this ought not to be asked for nor paid and had enjoined us to help suppress so iniquitous and demoralizing a practice. As his first trick did not work the Sheikh tried another tack. When passing through his territory we must hire camels from him; he himself would then accompany and protect us and we of course would give him a royal recompense. Here, to our great satisfaction, Muhsin, the leader of our escort, gave proof of his qualities as a negotiator. He was very polite,

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restrained and agreeable and he had the patience to let the other party talk. He would listen until the right moment came which was when both parties had made their standpoint clear and had declared they would stick to it. Then after some soothing introductory remarks Muhsin would suggest a compromise which built a bridge between the hard logic of Western argumentation and crude beduin greed. It was evident from the beginning that we should have to pay. Our British friends were far away and we were scarcely qualified to start suppressing the inveterate bad habits of the hinterland of Aden. We found a way out and assuaged our conscience by finally offering the Sheikh compensation for our not hiring his camels, explaining that we could not afford the loss of time incurred in changing our animals of burden. We had not made it easy for the Sheikh to levy his toll, we had not yielded to his claim but we had concluded the discussion by making a frugal gesture of friendship. Thus we hoped to dissipate the impression that we were people of wealth for such a reputation was dangerous and would land us in difficulties that would increase at each successive barrier.

When the Sheikh and his men had left we rounded off our first day's trek with a simple meal. In the glowing ashes of the camp-fire were set a number of round stones from the bed of the wadi. The cook prepared some dough, took up the hot stones one by one, blew the ash from them and then covered stone after stone with a coat of paste. Within a few minutes this type of bread was baked and to every member of the party was handed a breadstone. The layer of bread was peeled off and although in places it tasted of ash and sand it was very palatable. When travelling with a caravan all should eat together, sharing the simple beduin dish and occasionally the treats of Western fare. Our meals were short and intensive; all were willing to help in preparing them and their savoury odours would stir the roughest beduin heart. It was at meal-times that the team spirit was at its best and we were most united. Thereafter would inevitably follow the ear-splitting *danā* songs of the beduin which, unless we intervened, would continue until far past midnight for our diminutive but hardy caravan men were indefatigable.

The next morning our departure was much delayed. Bir Lamas had two big wells that were still giving water when others in the neighbourhood had run dry. The flocks from over a wide area gathered here and the inhabitants of adjacent villages came with their donkeys to carry away well-filled water-skins. From daybreak onwards there was a crush of men

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and animals around the wells. This captured our attention and thus gave our beduin an opportunity to dally. Every day they could prolong the trip meant for them one day more of good earnings without doing more work.

Camels, cows, donkeys, sheep and goats with their herdsmen waited near the wells. The watering is the work of the womenfolk and only if it is too heavy for them are they assisted by the men. The wells of Bir Lamas, thirty feet deep with a diameter of ten feet, did not produce enough water to be drawn in the normal way. Men had to descend to the very bottom where the water collected in holes from which it was scooped into leather buckets that were lowered on ropes. Women then would raise the buckets and pour the water into wooden troughs for the waiting animals or into water-skins for the waiting villagers. The water that was scraped from the uneven bottom of the well was of course far from clear. But water is so precious an element that when it is scarce neither men nor animals insist on a high quality. The shepherdesses had continually to chase the persistent goats away from the trough in order to water the patient cows, donkeys, camels and sheep. The women soon became accustomed to us and although at the start they were afraid of our cameras we eventually succeeded in taking photographs of them in that typical wadi setting.

When at last our camels were loaded and the camp broke up we knew that it was too late to reach Lōdar that same day. The path first followed the wadi and soon we saw on our left a village of stone houses nestling against the sloping side of the wadi. Here were the winter quarters of the dwellers in the wadi who in summer preferred huts made of dry branches of bushes tied together and covered with matting which they surrounded with thick, thorny fences as a protection against wild animals. The stone houses stood well above the seil level and were thus free from the possible danger of water torrents in the wadi in winter-time. The summer village was set up in the wadi bed nearby. As the caravan rounded the village we cautiously approached to take some pictures of the local way of living. The people were a little shy but we met with no opposition until we came across a man who, as soon as he saw us, bent to pick up a stone and with a torrent of foul language rushed at us. His screams were heard by the caravan and immediately some of the soldiers ran to our aid, but the poor fanatic was not to be pacified, so leaving him to the soldiers we disappeared as quickly as possible in order to avoid giving more offence. The experience

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taught us that it is wrong for a foreigner when alone to go near dwelling-places; he should always be accompanied by a man from the neighbourhood.

The path soon left the wadi and started winding through a wide plain where the notched lines of silhouetted villages appeared on the top ridges of distant hills. The Sheikh of this territory was the man who had come to us the night before and who had been with us from the early morning acting as our *siyāra* (guide and protector) in his domain. The villages here were built close to patches of loam where agriculture was possible. The Sheikh told us that four years of drought had given rise to great stringency and that even for their daily needs they had to cover big distances to bring water from the few remaining wells that were not dried up.

The land through which we were trekking was too short of water to keep the date-palms alive. Their green, sharp-pointed leaves that told of one Arab luxury were absent from the landscape. This was still the region of the *nibq* (also called the '*ilb* or *sidr*, the tree of waterless places and of the poor), whose fruit, the *dōm*, is so common, that passers-by are allowed to shake the small berries from the branches or knock them off the tree by throwing stones. Under this tree shepherdesses with their goats take shelter against the heat of the sun. In days of food shortage they climb about the branches and beat down the leaves and twigs with long sticks. The sight of goats, standing on their hind legs under a tree and staring expectantly upwards is invariably associated with the *nibq*. We walked into the Sheikh's large village of Al Mesurra to look at it. The local youth was tiresomely inquisitive and ill-disposed towards us. It was interesting to notice that here, as also later on, amidst the lofty aversion displayed by the mass of the population, some few individuals in distress would come confidently to us and beg our help for an ailing child or for assistance in some trouble. At this particular place we were asked for medicine for a little girl who had already been suffering for two and a half months from an inflammation of the jaw. So far as possible we refused requests for medical help: we were not qualified to give it and our stock of medicines was limited. Occasionally, however, we could not avoid calls being made upon us and had to distribute disinfecting lotions, patent-medicines and so on. The people seemed to be firmly convinced that all travelling Westerners must be doctors. Once we began to help the number of sufferers would increase rapidly and our responsibilities would grow in proportion. For the girl with the festering abscess we promised

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that when we were able to get at our medicine chest, which would be at our next halting-place, we would send a boric solution and some bandages. But what was the use of boric solution and bandages in hands that had not been washed for months, in houses where only water for drinking purposes was to be found and where the air was filled with the buzz of flies? Even a doctor here would face problems that are insoluble.

We halted at noon in the sun-pierced shade of a thorny acacia. It astonished our companions that we always chose places far from human habitation. Here there was a prospect of real rest and an occasional breeze but meagre shade. We tried to spread out our blankets over the flat tops of the thorns but this was a ticklish job, especially with a wind blowing. The spots of shade, too, shifted with the sun. But when the rest is not too sweet there is the advantage that one is soon ready to move on. Our caravan usually started off again at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The path was fine, generally flat, and sloped gently down to the Wadi al Jōf. The bushes became bigger and were interspersed with small trees. Here, too, was more animal life. Some arnab (rabbits) sprang up and scuttled away from the caravan, the ever attentive soldier-escort missing them with their rifle shots. The escort did their utmost to provide something extra for the evening pot, they stalked in wide circles but luck was not with them. It looked as if later on, when they came to the barren jōl, the bag would be small indeed.

Weaver-birds had strung their bag-shaped nests on the thorny branches of the trees and their busy fluttering and chirping was a joy for us all, as we had become used to moving in country where drought and heat struck all life dumb and motionless. This part of the way lay along the great trade route from Baidha in the south of the Yemen to the coast near Shuqra and then to Aden. We met several travellers and tried to chat with them. They were dark-skinned men, nearly black and had deepened their colour even more by rubbing the skin with indigo. They rode their camels with a rifle resting on their knees or walked beside their beasts with the inseparable weapon carried like a yoke on the neck with the arms hanging over butt-end and barrel.

Al Jōf came in sight towards sunset. It was a large, square village with some stone-built houses and many huts seeking the protection of the desert fortresses that guarded the settlement. The place seemed to be rich in cattle for in the dusk herds of sheep and goats and some cows were driven homewards. The village was surrounded by a dyke of dry dung. Beyond

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that a broad belt of fields lay waiting for the seil upon which the agriculture depended. The stalks of dhura (*Andropogon sorghum*) were still lying on the fields which had long been dry. Even the wells in Al Jōf were waterless. The daily water ration had to be brought a distance of eight miles in bags loaded on donkeys. How crushing a burden on the shoulders of the women this all-important problem of satisfying the daily need of water was could only be guessed by us. The children who crowded round us must wash only a few times a year and that would be when the blessing of the seil came rushing down from the high Yemeni mountains. The first to announce the approach of the seil receives a gift from the community. He is called "the bringer of a good tidings". He is also the herald of a feast. With the advent of the seil everyone stirs into action: conduits and dykes in the fields must be guarded and kept in repair; as much as possible of the precious water must be stowed and stored in deeper places in the fields and near the villages. The ideal playground of the desert youth comes into being. They dive and splash about in the water and make up for being deprived of it for many, many months. The grown-ups come and sit around the little lake while it lasts and enjoy for hours at a stretch the sight and the smell of so much water. The water soon disappears but the loam soil retains enough of it to provide sufficient moisture for a quickly-growing crop to ripen.

But now the village children stood around us with grey-powdered, naked bodies. Their skins seemed to resist the dust and lack of water for we saw no sign of skin diseases. Their eyes ran a greater risk from dust and flies, and cases of eye diseases were numerous.

We set up our camp in the sandy seil-bed, at a respectful distance from the dung-walls, dust and smells of Al Jōf. A sharp haggling was started to buy a goat, not because we wanted to save a few Maria Theresa dollars, but simply to prove that we were normal beings with brains and with a proper appreciation of the earthly goods bestowed upon us by God. The bargain was eventually struck and while our banquet was being prepared on the outer edge of the camp we had a quiet spell. The villagers and their dogs followed every detail of the activity of preparing the meal with silent attention. We were so tired that we fell asleep at once in the unusual stillness and only returned to reality when we were awakened for a dinner of roast goat's meat with thick brown rounds of bread baked in sesame oil.

Lōdar, where a sultan lived, was reached early next day. The place,

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at the foot of a formidable mountain wall with a fantastically-shaped promontory where the Sultan's castle was situated, had already been visible the day before. It is called Az-Zāra and we reached it in two hours trekking from Al Jōf. Az-Zāra, a hamlet at half an hour's distance from the little town of Lōdar, was probably chosen by the Sultan as his place of residence for strategic reasons. On our way from Al Jōf we met two Jews from Lōdar. In Al Jōf, to our great surprise, we had seen some Jews, living among the Arabs and looking just as poor and dirty as they, but immediately recognizable by the two ringlets that dangled in front of their ears. More still their whole attitude and the quiet expression of their face spoke of their being Jews. Centuries of oppression and of silently suffered disdain had deeply pressed their stamp on this ineradicable race. We were here at the southernmost limit of habitation of the Yemeni Jews, the branch that is said to have been cut off from the main group in the days of persecution that followed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They are then said to have fled southward deeper and deeper into Arabia until they could go no further in this south-west corner or because they had here reached the most fertile part of the Arabian Peninsula. In Lōdar we hoped to get into closer contact with this people that nowhere betrays its kind.

In Al Jōf were also some slaves, descendants of those formerly imported here. There seems to be no possibility of new arrivals.

Some optimist told us, boasting of his village, that a seil could be expected up to five times a year in which case two harvests could be garnered. But this statement caused a serious shaking of the heads of the old bystanders and several of them put up one finger. One harvest a year! Allāhu karīm! Allah is generous!

Beyond the promontory we approached the first of the *husūn* (fortresses) of Az-Zāra. A messenger was sent ahead to give warning of our approach in the proper way. Az-Zāra lay at the foot of a steep, rocky spur some distance in front of the wall of the high Yemeni plateau. The fortress-dwellings of the Sultan were built halfway up the flank and were connected by staircases with the building where the people usually gathered and with a masjid. The residential portion and at the same time the last retreat in case of war lay highest, that is, on the crest of the rock. Down below were the houses of the citizens. The staircases between the fortresses soon became lively with movement. Soldiers came running from their quarters and descended to the plain where they lined up in one long row waiting for the Sultan who followed with his sons and retinue. It was an impressive sight.

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The buildings constructed of stone blocks cemented with mud abutted on and in some cases surmounted the yellow-brown rocks. They were high structures, tapering slightly upwards and simple and strong in line. Against that background moved men, blue-black with indigo. They had bandoliers with glittering Mauser cartridges round their waists, finely engraved silver jambiyāt on their stomachs, rifles on their shoulders and they descended the stairs with quick, springy jumps. Their head-cloths had been so copiously smeared with indigo that they stood out stiff and shining. A tuft of greasy curls crowned their heads and each had a small bouquet of fragrant herbs and flowers coquettishly stuck in the back or the side of his head-cloth. They were smart, these colourful indigo warriors!

The hostages of the Sultan, who lived in the low houses at the foot of the rocky spur, had also to be present, partly to satisfy their own curiosity and partly to increase the glory of their ruler. Round their ankles they wore heavy iron rings linked together by an oblong shackle. Some of them had pushed the rings up their legs and carried the connecting shackle in their hands by which means they were able to walk with small careful steps. Others leapt with both feet at a time as children do when sack-racing. They advanced with much jingling sometimes colliding with each other and falling in the sand. We were not allowed to go nearer and so looked on, awaiting the arrival of the Sultan. When he arrived the faces of the soldiers stiffened and became very solemn. There was complete silence, except for the jangling of the chains and the dull thuds that came from the hostages. Their foolish jumping in their heavy chains formed a lugubriously humorous accompaniment to the scene.

A sign was made that it was now our turn to draw nearer. In deadly silence with our escort walking ahead one behind the other we approached the long line that watched us but gave no sign of friendly feelings. We formed our line facing theirs but at a good distance. Muhsin, the leader of the escort and his men then stepped out into the space between the two lines. A target on the rocky wall, a white spot, was pointed out to him. He shouldered his rifle, took aim and fired until his magazine was empty. The other soldiers followed his example. The ranks remained silent. When our escort had finished shooting, the Sultan himself, Muhammad bin Jābil, stepped forward and fired, then his son Jābil bin Muhammad and every one of his soldiers shot once in turn. When this part of the ceremony was over and we were deafened by the interminable bangs, their rigid features relaxed and greetings began. The leaders approached

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each other, clasped hands with a resounding smack and began reciting in a loud voice the short ritual questions and answers about whence, whither, what news and so on. Stealthy looks came in our direction when Muhsin said who we were, where we were going and what we were doing. We seemed to inspire little confidence or sympathy and were left standing alone when this impressive ceremony of greeting was finished and the Sultan and his suite walked back to the fortresses. We felt disillusioned after the tension of this unexpectedly complicated, heavily serious and barbarously picturesque ceremony of welcome with its abrupt ending. Muhsin however conveyed to us the Sultan's message that we were welcome and that a guesthouse in Az-Zāra was being prepared for us. The house proved to be a small mud building with one room which we shared with our soldiers. There was little space but we had protection against the sun. We sat on a blanket spread out on the floor.

The Sultan sent some of his soldiers to see whether we were comfortable. They told us that this Sultan was subordinate to his younger cousin, the Sultan of Ariab and Az-Zāra, Sālih bin Husein. The latter was not here but in Ariab, near Mukeiras, where the British had a landing-ground and wireless-station. That there was a landing-ground here as well was soon evident when two R.A.F. planes appeared, circled round and then landed amidst clouds of dust on a flat stretch of land between Az-Zāra and Lodar. A saddled horse was immediately despatched to the landing-ground by the Sultan. A good hour later these advance guards of British authority flew off again.

The Sultan sent us two goats. It was his idea that travellers should first eat, and then, being in a good mood, would be ready for talking. For the first time since Aden we washed our hands thoroughly before the meal; those dirty hands had not been a real drawback. Roasted goat cut up with a pocket-knife and eaten with greasy rounds of bread had tasted well enough from dirty hands. No, really clean hands were a nuisance; for now it almost annoyed us that inquisitive visitors heartily took a clean hand and left upon it their sticky indigo print.

After the meal Muhsin changed his dark-blue cotton soldier's garb for a multi-coloured non-regulation attire and prepared to pay a visit to the Sultan to discuss the carrying out of our plans. He soon came back with good news. Hermann and Wasi were to be allowed to climb the high plateau from which they hoped to see over a wide stretch of country and to take bearings on outstanding landmarks. They would have a chance of

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collecting highland flora and would try to reach an advanced British wireless-station there guarding the southern Yemeni frontier. We had promised the authorities in Aden that we would send them news of our movements if we could reach that post. A donkey was sent by the Sultan for the transport of instruments and blankets, a horse for Hermann to ride and a soldier to act as a guide. Thus they could leave at once and do a good part of the heavy climbing in the cool afternoon. I myself could not join them as the Sultan awaited me for a call and a talk. Soon after my fellow travellers had left I was on my way with Muhsin to the castle. As I drew closer to the group of castle buildings it became quite evident that defence against enemies had been the guiding principle of the architect. The buildings were high and protected at the back by the steep, rocky wall. Small square openings in the thick walls allowed little light and fresh air to penetrate but made the entry of bullets difficult. In front of his stronghold the Sultan had built a small masjid from which descended a wide masonry staircase.

We preferred to climb a goat track to the narrow gate that formed the principal entrance. Within the gate Sultan Muhammad bin Jābil stood waiting to welcome us. He then preceded us to the majlis, which lay beyond the masjid and consisted of a large reception hall which was both untidy and dirty.

"Must he have a chair?" they asked Muhsin behind my back.

"No, he thinks our ways are good."

Thereupon I was led to a place against the wall where a strip of sheep's skin had been put in readiness and on this the Sultan also sat down. Our conversation began haltingly. The Sultan clearly did not know what to think of us; we anticipated interference and each seemed to be in a hostile frame of mind. The majlis gradually filled with inquisitive elders. The sickening smell of indigo and the blue-black stains on the wall where indigo backs had leaned were typical of these assembly halls. They had seen Western visitors yet the visitors had not been numerous enough to overcome superficial barriers and to inspire confidence. The Sultan thus preferred to wait for what I was going to say. It seemed to me that the safest course was to put some innocuous questions. How many inhabitants were there? Four thousand at least. Was that all? Nearly! Women and children included? The Sultan laughed. Of course not! There are very many of them. That was the number of the soldiers, of those who bore arms. We then talked about the stretch of land between the southern frontier of

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the Yemen and the Sultanate of Shuqra on the coast. A great trade route went through it; near Az-Zāra the merchandise was changed from camels to the donkeys that carry it up to the high mountain plateaux. From the Yemen little was exported. Were there Jews too? Yes, many; they were never cultivators but always craftsmen, mostly silversmiths making elegant jambiyāt for the men and belts, girdles, ear-rings, bangles and anklets for the women and girls. The Sultan went on to say that the Jews were too feeble to carry arms; they would never harm an Arab woman, not even when alone in the fields. They knew that if they did, their necks would be wrung. They were not allowed to marry a Moslem woman unless they themselves became Moslems which happened very seldom. They knew the language of their Jewish religion and had their own teachers and schools.

The Sultan then asked me why it was that the Germans were expelling the Jews from their country and how the rebellion in Palestine was going on. These two questions we had met with already and would have to answer many times more. Our interrogators invariably wanted to know whether England was on the side of the Jews or the Arabs. I asked the Sultan how he knew of these problems and whether he got newspapers. Was there perhaps a wireless set in the neighbourhood? No, he got his information from people who travelled with caravans through the country. Prudently and with a marked bias in favour of the British I gave my views. Not only because thanks to British assistance and to the confidence extended to us we were travelling in a country where the authority of Great Britain was just penetrating, but also out of conviction, although I agreed there were some grounds for criticism.

England's Palestine policy had to contend with some fundamental errors the bitter fruit of which we saw in these far Arab lands. The distrust that had arisen would only disappear with the passage of time and with the implementation of a wise policy of justice to the original Arab inhabitants of Palestine. When we talked with Arabs we found it possible, while acknowledging their acquired and ancient rights, to stress the desirability of a co-operation with the Jews that might be profitable to both parties and to point to the wonderful economic benefits which Jewish immigration into Palestine had already produced. From the discussion of political difficulties in that country so rich in Jewish, Christian and Moslem traditions I found it possible to pass to what interested me more in that moment—the political situation in the Sultan's own domain. According to his showing

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it was, at that moment, satisfactory since he had succeeded in defeating various rebellious groups and in taking their leaders prisoner and keeping them in chains as hostages. As the Sultan was speaking the picture of those poor devils carrying the heavy shackles of their chains in their hands and hopping like sack-racers recurred to my mind. Imprisonment for life is a very long sentence. Oh Sultan! Your religion as well as mine commends mercy. An atmosphere of disapproval hung perceptibly in the majlis but there was no relaxation of attention. Compassion in politics was neither stupid nor weak. That had been proved by the Wahhābi King, Ibn Sa'ūd, who was feared for his severity but famed for his mercy to defeated enemies. This quality had helped to make him the greatest Arab ruler of our time. Why not try then the way of compassion and experience the good it would do to your own heart?

The Sultan burst out laughing and began talking in a loud voice to the people who were sitting along the walls and had been listening. Their number had increased during our conversation. Each new arrival greeted the Sultan with a resounding clasp of the hand and then made as if he were going to kiss the Sultan's hand. They made the sound of a kiss with their mouth but both hands were drawn away so that the lips did not actually touch the fingers. Members of his family and people of high social standing kissed the Sultan's elbow or shoulder or made a sniffing noise.

Meanwhile qishr coffee (a brew made of the husk of the coffee bean mixed with ginger and sugar) was handed round in dirty small cups. A servant continually refilled the empty cups from a large copper kettle until by a slight shake of the cup one indicated that one desired no more. The conversation, however, continued for although the people here were anti-Wahhābi they wanted to hear more of the remarkable head of the house of Sa'ūd. The Sultan had laughed but had nevertheless been quite impressed.

He now said that five years before he had himself performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. That I could say I came straight from the Holy Country raised my stock immediately. Such a declaration was unexpected from a Western foreigner. They asked what the latest news was and what was my opinion on the trend of affairs in Sa'ūdi Arabia. On those subjects much could be said of deep interest to every Moslem and from then on there was a quick exchange of question and answer and I seemed to gain some of their sympathy. In the end the Sultan showed me out but stood and continued the conversation near the rampart of his bastion. Opposite

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us the setting sun poured over the wild landscape a golden light that gradually changed to red and violet. On my asking where the path of Hermann and Wasi lay, the Sultan pointed to the steep, high border of the southern Yemeni plateau. It seemed to cut off that mysterious country from the outside world.

Some days later we would attempt to climb this same plateau but to the east of the Yemeni territory. Our route would lie through the Talh pass, the obstacle that had barred the entrance to the highlands against Captain Hamilton and his party. Here, from where we stood, it seemed impossible to climb that flank of the plateau with camels. In order that I might have a better view of the surrounding country the Sultan invited me to climb up higher to where the last building, his own living quarters, stood. We were now absolutely alone and he took the opportunity to put some questions that seemed to be still on his mind.

What had become of Turkey? Why did not the Arabian princes go to the assistance of their co-religionists in Palestine? Turkey was known here because she had ruled, more or less, a great part of Arabia for about four centuries and here we were at the southernmost border of her former influence. A new Turkey however had arisen with no Arabian aspirations whatsoever. Were the days of the Turks good days? Oh, yes. And now, what? Under the Turks we were completely left to ourselves; we were free and for the ruling families the revenues were good. And the working classes and the slaves? The British are more just than the Turks. One question burned on his tongue: Are you not in fact a Moslem too? No; I have my own religion as you have yours. I belong to the people of The Book. Thus your prophet called us, and he spoke with reverence of our prophet 'Isā, the only One without sin. Then how did you get to know all sorts of things about our religion? Do stay on some days more and tell me how I can help you.

It was in this mood of unhopd-for cordiality that we took leave of each other. Patience and time had been necessary to achieve this result but such an experience in the land of the indigo warrior-tribes who up to now have had so little contact with Western influences gave me hope and confirmed me in the conviction that everything would turn out right if only one could get the chance of talking with the people. The danger lay in a possible collision with half-wild fanatics who will not enter into quiet conversation but shout one down and work themselves and their comrades into paroxysms of fury. Talk, much talk, would have to be our weapon!

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In the gathering dusk of evening Muhsin and I descended from the confines of the castle and walked back to our humble guest-house in the village where Frau von Wissmann had had to stay behind. She was to get her chance later in women's apartments. Around us was a pattering of goats' hoofs on the rock: the flocks were returning home. The animals knew their own houses, entered them and climbed the staircases to reappear on the flat roofs. Together with the human inhabitants they there arranged themselves for the night.

The next day, while waiting for the return of the two hill climbers, we took a look at our surroundings. The principal attraction of Az-Zāra is its fortress group which fits in so wonderfully with the rocky landscape. A second item of interest was a high white qubba (a small building with a dome-shaped roof built over the tomb of a revered and saintly man). This small and peaceful enclosure rested in the shade of some tall trees close by the village well and contrasted sharply with the strongholds, which were quite near but towered high above it.

At half an hour's distance from Az-Zāra, on the flat top of a low, sandy hill lies the much bigger settlement of Lōdar, the real capital of the sultanate. Here Captain Hamilton had stationed a small detachment of his soldiers who had a primitive intelligence and liaison task to perform. As soon as they had news of our arrival they established contact with us and even clubbed together and offered us a goat. For the time being they occupied a modest and inconspicuous position in this independent little world and they had to try gradually to gain confidence.

Across a wide patch of bone-dry fields Frau von Wissmann and I approached the wells at the foot of the hill on which Lōdar is built. There was activity here the whole day long: drawing water, pouring it into wooden troughs for the waiting flocks and camels and loading filled water-skins on donkeys for the town. A yelling crowd of children came running towards us when they saw us coming and enveloped us in a cloud of dust with cries for bakhshish. They were all very eager to be photographed and jostled each other in front of our lenses; they made all quiet sight-seeing impossible.

Lōdar had some stone-built houses, two mosques and a Jews' quarter. Most of the dwellings were made of dry branches of bushes tied together. The Jews, of whom there were thirteen families, all lived together, narrowly hemmed in by the Arabs. Their houses were the same as Arab houses except perhaps that they were a little cleaner inside. We entered the

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workshop of a silversmith where two Jews were working at a woman's belt. With the submissive kindness peculiar to this suppressed people they made us welcome. They had no objection to our ascending the outer staircase to have a look at the sitting room. We asked this so as to be, for a moment at least, free of our escort of noisy youth. The upper room was indeed much cleaner and better kept than in an Arab house of the same type. But the women we found here were not given the rough outdoor tasks in the fields and with the cattle that are allotted to their Arab sisters. They were dressed and had their hair made up in exactly the same way as the Arab women and even their faces were also painted yellow. The men and the boys were at once and everywhere distinguishable from Arabs by the ringlets they wore in front of their ears, by the skull-caps they wore instead of turbans or head-cloths and by the absence of belts to their long gowns. According to the Arab saying they were too weak for work on the fields or to carry arms. Is it not more probable that they were denied landed property and so had no chance of doing agricultural work and that the carrying of arms had been forbidden them from earliest times? They had good intellectual qualities that were continually cultivated thanks to their marvellous faithfulness to the religion and traditions of their forefathers. They studied the Hebrew language; they read the Books of the Old Testament; they raised their spirit from scorn and oppression by recourse to their election as God's chosen people, by holding on, in unshakable belief to the promise of a national restoration and of a reconciliation with the Lord of Israel. In this way they had been able to endure twenty centuries of oppression and no contempt had been able to break them spiritually.

The thirteen families in Lōdar, narrowly ringed in by the dominant Moslems, had kept faith with Judaism. They made no marriages with the Arabs and no acceptance of their religion. The tiny group, cut adrift from its fellows and its native land, kept itself pure. They could only live by enduring in silence but they could survive by clinging to their great traditions and to a belief that was more abiding than the centuries. Moslem rulers had forced upon them outward distinctions to single them out and keep them apart but these were not really necessary. The Jew although cut off from the mass of his nation for nearly twenty centuries, the lonely and oppressed Jew of South Arabia, carries his own distinguishing marks. They shine from the soul that has clung to a great tradition and has been ennobled by Jehovah's promises to His people. The Arabs had not

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subdued their brothers the Jews. That was our last impression of Lōdar.

We walked back to Az Zāra still accompanied by the crowd of Arab children who stirred up clouds of dust in their eagerness to enjoy to the utmost our unexpected presence in their midst. In the guest-house we found two very tired climbers, deeply satisfied with the beautiful scenery they had seen, with the great bag of plants they had collected, the panoramic photographs they had taken, and the invaluable bearings and sketches they had obtained for their maps. We all immediately set to work classifying and packing the collection so that we might be ready to move on early next morning.

CHAPTER 3

The Approach to the Talh Pass

By leaving Lōdar early in the morning it should be possible to reach Al Quleita before nightfall. We suffered some delay because the soldier who had climbed up to the plateau had fallen ill presumably because of the cold or through excess of fatigue. Vomiting and diarrhoea sapped his powers of resistance and he had to be left on the plateau. We sent a horse from Zāra to bring him in and he looked poor indeed when he arrived. We then tried on him the wonder-working bacteriophage that had been discovered by Professor d'Hérelle and developed by Dr. Dorenbos of Alexandria. Our down-hearted escort was cheered by stories of cures that we had seen worked by the phage in an astounding short time and happily here again the remedy did not fail us. Nobody had to be left behind in Zāra and so a little later, with thankful hearts, we all quitted the rocky fortresses of the indigo warriors. The Sultan seemed to have valued a small present we had sent him, for his son came on his behalf, caught up with the caravan, recommended us in his father's name to the protection of Allah and handed us as a farewell gift a tin of local honey. Then Hamilton's soldiers all came to see us off and accompanied us a good distance beyond Lōdar.

The way lay through flat country with great stretches of tilled fields which, in the expectation of more rain, had already been sown. The caravan was well rested and made good progress. Leaving the 'Audhilla sultanate we soon reached Mas'am, the first big village of the Dathina country. Here lived a Sheikh who was well known to our escort. He seemed to have been warned of our coming for he came running towards us hurriedly firing his rifle as a sign of welcome. One of our soldiers responded in the same way. They met with a resounding clasp of the hands while their lips smacked kisses into the air.

The Sheikh gave us a pressing invitation to be his guests, to eat with him and stay the night. We were not at all eager to halt as we were making good progress and felt still fresh enough to do many hours more.

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Moreover, a caravan once unloaded is difficult to get going again. But the Sheikh was adamant and would not take a refusal. With friendly insistence he laid hands on the rifle of the leader of our escort, took it as prize and, walking at the head of the caravan, led us to the village. His house soon became a scene of great activity as the festive goat was prepared for slaughter. He was clearly going to show us what Arab hospitality meant in the best circles. We begged him not to kill the goat for us, but in vain: two were sacrificed.

We were sitting in a simple, dark room of his mud-built house when the first bugs were discovered; but we were too touched by the abounding kindness of this man who was to us a complete stranger to allow ourselves to be disturbed by such trivialities.

In between his busy preparations the Sheikh dropped in now and then for a short talk. His father and brothers also took a turn at entertaining us while the meal was being prepared. The father had been shot in the leg in one of their wars and had for that reason conferred the early dignity of leadership upon his son. Four years before the *Sei'ar* beduin together with the *Mishqās* had made a raid on the *'Awāliq* (plural of *'Aulaqi*). They had seized some camels but the *'Awāliq* had followed them up, killed thirty-five of them at a cost of only three to themselves and recovered their animals. This by no means small beduin war was waged under the very eyes of the British only such a short time before. The father of the Sheikh asked how conditions were in Europe: they had heard rumours that war was imminent there. His next question was the one we expected: do the British really act against the Arabs in Palestine? Once again I produced the other side of the picture pointing to the equity of admitting a restricted number of Jews into a country which originally was sparsely populated. I said something too of the prosperity brought to the country and to its Arab inhabitants by Jewish activities. The infirm old leader was full of criticism but fortunately for us the conversation was cut short by the arrival of an abundant meal which the Sheikh now brought in with obvious pride. The thorny subject of the Palestine troubles seemed to be familiar to all the leading Arabs even in the remotest corner of Arabia. The anti-British view must have had able expounders!

The rice arrived in piles with chunks of meat stuck into it. In front of every one of us was placed as a plate a thick brown round of *burr* (wheat bread). We tucked up our sleeves, invoked the name of Allah and began. We ate without drinking and in silence but steadily and heartily. After

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the meal qishr coffee mixed with honey was handed round. Only then would the host and the members of his family eat.

A shower of rain, the first we had had, accompanied by heavy distant thunder passed over the village of Mas'ām while we were safely sitting inside the house. The sky was still overcast and it had become much cooler but the rain had ceased when we took leave of the Sheikh and his family who had discharged the religious duty of extending hospitality to the "son of the road" (ibn as-sabil) in so generous a fashion that we felt overwhelmed and abashed by their splendid example. Before we left we were allowed to see the view from their roof and to take a photograph of the village with its beautiful background of reddish granite mountains. The Sheikh saw us off and in order to be able to say something to me in private he hooked his little finger in mine and drew me ahead of the caravan and of the inquisitive crowd that accompanied it.

He knew of Captain Hamilton's failure to get through the Talh pass and wanted to tell me of the difficulties we might expect there. Some tribes near the pass were at war with each other and for that reason, partly out of fear and partly because of refractoriness, had closed their territory to all unknown travellers. If we could succeed in getting guides from the tribes involved in war we should get through because the code of honour of these countries forbade that we should then be attacked. Should we not succeed in getting as guides men who would assume responsibility for the territory of their tribes we must come back and he would show us a route that lay to the north-west by which we should be able to pass. Once over the Talh pass we should be close to Nisāb or Ansāb where lived the Sultan under whose authority he himself was and whom he could recommend as a faithful friend of the British. Captain Hamilton had given us a letter to this sultan who seemed to have his warlike sheikhs very little under control.

Our route now passed through majestic scenery. The heavily-clouded sky gave an extraordinary perspective to the wild mountain range towards which we were trekking. It must have rained hard here for the path was soft and muddy and the going was difficult for the camels. Slipping on their long legs and falling with a heavy load is one of the greatest dangers for marching camels. In the usually dry seil beds a torrent of russet muddy water was now rushing and our caravan advanced at a slow pace. On the bare, rocky mountains that lay in front of the fantastically-shaped principal range we could see some lilliputian stone houses of beduin. Around their

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settlements straw-ricks were to be seen for the beduin here were herdsmen who after abundant rain turned to agriculture. In the wadis grew numerous *ithl* (tamarisk) trees which gave colour to the landscape and the rich diversity of shapes in the mountain coulisses drew our admiring attention. Never in Arabia had I walked through so beautiful and varied a landscape and never too had I seen Arabia's mountains in this clear, rain-washed atmosphere, dripping wet, with slim streams coursing down their stony flanks. The strong afternoon light was softened by huge masses of cloud; the haze of the quivering heat was gone and forgotten.

As we approached a small village a man who was at work seized his rifle when he saw our caravan coming and fired off a shot. We were all startled but the shot proved to be a false alarm: it was fired as a gesture of welcome by a soldier from Aden who was spending his leave here and helping his brother to build a house. He was unrecognizable beneath his indigo paint but we knew at once his type when with a broad grin he came forward to introduce himself moving with the easy soldierly bearing and confident frankness of the men who have had Colonel Lake's or Captain Hamilton's training. Proud as he was of being a soldier he still felt absolutely at home in the village where he might later be sent as a man of confidence.

Near this hamlet we saw some scratchings on a rocky wall that had been made by children as they tended the flocks. We noticed particularly the similarity between these graffiti and the drawings of men and animals that are to be found throughout the greater part of Arabia, a similarity which extends even to rock-drawings of pre-Islamic times. Although some of the latter show greater technical accomplishment they have a marked resemblance to the rock-drawings attributed to herdsmen and people from passing caravans.

The sun was setting as we reached the large village of Al Qibeli. Sharp and provocative against the evening sky, far away on the top of a mountain ridge stood the clear outlines of a group of fortresses belonging to Al Quleita, the goal we had set ourselves for that day. It was however impossible for us to go on in the darkness because of Hermann's map-making. In that work there must be no gaps.

What would await us in Al Qibeli? That is the sort of question every traveller puts to himself when evening falls and he is obliged to seek hospitality in an unexpected place. A noisy band of children burst out of the village and rushed towards the caravan as it halted. The bigger boys

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could not tell us whether it would be possible for us to hire an empty house for one night. As we were travelling without tents we could not remain in the open for thunder-clouds were drawing near.

Then there came in our direction a young lad in a clean white shift who simply told us to follow him. We had no other choice and blindly put our fate in his hands. He led us over the familiar mounds of dry dung that seemed to surround all human habitations here to a dirty, crowded village. We passed through a stable into a dark, narrow cellar. We could not see our hands before us and stood huddled together where our host had left us. We felt that our confidence was being put to the test. But once again we were not disappointed. The father of the lad now came forward saying, as he welcomed us, that a room upstairs was being prepared. We soon had proof of the extraordinary good fortune that had placed us under the protection of a man who knew the world. When Italy conquered Abyssinia our host had seen his opportunity and had started running two motor-buses between Jibūti and Addis Ababa. His venture became a paying concern and he had now come home for breathing-space after his hard work.

The village of Al Qibeli was big and like Mas'ām had some Jewish silversmiths. As a result of our unexpected arrival the wedding feast of the daughter of the house was postponed until the following day.

"We had to keep you waiting so long in that dark cell" the father explained to us in apology, "because your room was full of preparations for the wedding."

He did not understand that we were silent when we heard of the postponed wedding party because we were touched by such hospitality and lost our composure for a moment.

The wind and the rain announced an approaching thunder-storm. It was pitch dark outside and only just in time had we and our whole caravan been taken in by this family who for our sake had foregone a wedding party.

When we had all been fed the women, who were crowded together in one room so that they might not be seen by strange men, began to make merry together. Frau von Wissmann was invited to go and meet them. She found a crowded and stuffy room full of women dressed in their finest and wearing all their trinkets. The scene was a gay one. Some of the women were dancing to the accompaniment of monotonous but tirelessly repeated tunes whose rhythm was accentuated by clapping of the hands.

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while the excitement was maintained by high-throated trills (*zaghārit*). The lady visitor was given a little basket full of eggs as a present while we, in the name of the whole caravan, offered the bride a necklace which was much admired.

As the rain had now stopped the men and youths of the village amused themselves in front of the gate and danced by the light of a lantern to the beat of a cylindrical drum. Our escort joined in the fun. Each was now dressed in a loin-cloth fixed by the cartridge belt that held a glittering *jambīya*. How slender and young they looked, their dark eyes sparkling with joy and their black, greasy, curly heads uncovered! In the open space two lads danced in turn together elegantly holding each other, with hands lifted high, by the little finger. Thus they skipped up and down until a third came up behind them and presently took the place of one who retired. The onlookers marked the time by clapping their hands and often leaned forward to enjoy more fully the feminine grace of the dancers. They were not in the least bored by its unchanging monotony. We could see that everybody was enjoying with heart and soul the rhythm and beauty of the movement.

At our request they started a beduin dance in which all could join. They arranged themselves in two long rows facing each other, clapping hands to accentuate the time as the two ranks sang in turn. As they sang the rows started moving and now the time was also marked by stamping the feet. Gently rocking the upper part of the body the two rows approached each other. As the space between them became narrower and narrower the singing and stamping rose in volume. Every now and then one of the dancers would become too excited to stay in his row and would step into the narrow space between and execute there a frantic solo. When the rows nearly touched they started moving back again. This dancing they can keep up for hours. The singing of the men rising and falling with the accompaniment of stamping feet formed one sonorous murmur. Occasionally a singer would lift up his voice in a high-pitched falsetto and then the monotonous song and stamping of the mass would rise like the roar of nature in storm and thunder. From what remote centuries had this singing and dancing come down to the present desert generations of Arabia? They all sing and dance in this way and even the intricate melodies of individual *danā* songs are common property over the whole country. A wide field of research lies waiting here.

Next morning the caravan could of course not leave without having

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paid due respect to the impending wedding ceremony. Towards seven o'clock the news was spread that the bridegroom with companions from his village was approaching. Thereupon the people of our village all streamed down towards the plain. The women did not go beyond the dunghills where they stood looking on but the men formed ranks with a drummer and rifle-bearers ahead and waited for the arrival of the approaching procession. The subsequent proceedings were part of the wedding festivities.

The procession of the bridegroom also had a drummer and rifle-men and, in addition, two unladen camels. They danced and sang as they drew near while the camels in an easy trot were made to circle round them. They came up to within a hundred yards of us. Then followed singing in turns from both sides. The bridegroom's party then formed a column of two abreast and moved towards us in wide bends like those of a monstrous snake. When they were quite close our party struck up a song. They then retired and the bride's party started moving towards them in the same meandering way.

A shooting match followed. Four flat stones were set upright in the loosened soil as targets at which they shot with ball-cartridge until they shattered them. The bride's party shot first and our escort joined in for they had walked at the head of the column and, dressed in their best, had taken part in the dancing. Two men in white, local religious leaders, then came forward and pronounced in the name of each party the formulae prescribed by Moslem tradition. That was a short episode but it constituted the actual marriage ceremony. Finally, united in one big procession, all proceeded to the house of the bride where food was offered and the two camels were laden with the dower before setting off with the bride for her husband's village. The ceremony recalled the wilder customs of pre-Islamic times. After giving presents as our share in the festivities we took our leave and started for Al Quleita, the centre of the el-Fejj country.

On our way we were met by the son of one of the two Sheikhs who seemed to share authority between them. He announced that we should be welcome to his father who would undertake to provide camels and siyāras. On our arrival in Al Quleita a considerable ceremony of reception was organized with much shooting into the mountain-side and hearty clapping of hands. Half of our company was then led off by one Sheikh and the other half by the second. It was long before a meal was ready but when eventually served the food was abundant. Waiting, however,

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was no loss of time for we were nearing the difficult part of the trip and the more information we could get of what lay ahead the better. During our conversation the wind got up, thunder-clouds scudded across the sky and rain poured down heavily. The temperature fell considerably. In between the showers we stood on the flat roof and looked out over the surrounding country. What we saw filled us with sinister forebodings. The torrent beds, usually dry, were now filled to overflowing with muddy brown water that rushed at whirlwind speed down from the foot of the mountain washing away in many places the path we should have to follow.

There would be no question of our continuing that day: we should have to wait until the torrential but short-lived *suyūl* had run away and we could cross the wadi beds again. The luggage was brought into the house where we were staying. This was a filthy job in which we received little assistance. The village streets had become a deep mire of dung, which, as it became wet, began to stink. So we were imprisoned in the leaking house together with the bugs; from the attacks of those bloodthirsty enemies there would be no escape by retiring on to the roof.

Our greatest cause of anxiety, however, was that we were advancing so slowly. Our money was going and we might perhaps be short if later we were forced to buy our way through many obstacles. Further, the time available for this expedition was fixed by an inexorable limit: the date of arrival of the special ship that would take me from Mukalla back to my work in the Netherlands East Indies. My travelling companions, however, were cheerful and at ease. The escort was not in a hurry; for them our expedition was good fun and the caravan people could think of no better luck than to get pay without doing anything for it. So far as the team spirit was concerned this enforced pause was excellent. When one is trekking there is much hard work, tension often grows and at evening time in camp one is often too tired for long talks. Now talking was a natural pastime. Our meals we took together with the escort and our host. The food consisted of sour cakes of bread of which pieces were broken off and dipped into a bowl of either *samm* (liquid butter) or the broth of a hunk of goat's meat placed in the centre of the round eating-mat. The flat, tough cakes of bread were served in a woven basket with a cover which exactly fitted and protected them from flies. After meals we would start chatting and stories with much chaffing and laughter would follow. Once the escort put me the unexpected question:

"Yā Vander, (which they found was the most easily pronounced part

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of my name) say, which of us do you consider the best and handsomest?" In reply I gave preference to none of them but tried to twit them one after the other and to make fun of the various personal peculiarities I had observed during the march. When one can think of nothing against a man himself it is usually possible to have a tilt at his tribe or country. With the man who put the question I was fortunate.

"You, Muhammad bin Sālim Al Mansūr," I replied, "would be the best and handsomest if you were not so pugnacious. Now you are broken in all your limbs. You might better have been called Muhammad Al Maksūr (the broken one). Had you had your eyes open you would have kept out of the way of bullets and would now be the finest man present."

This sally was greeted with roars of applause and from then on the fine looking Sālim was called Al Maksūr.

"Abdallah might well have qualified if he had not once fallen ill during the night and so become nicknamed Al Marīdh (the sick one)."

The poor, squinting, unbelievably ugly caravan-boy became Faraj Al Mahbūb (the beloved one) and so on. They had a taste for such humour and childishly enjoyed a successful quip. This was a game we often played and it kept us in good humour during many a tiring march.

That evening Husein, the son of the Sheikh who was our host, came to me and asked me to go and have a talk with his father. Together we descended to the lower floors of the house and there in a small dimly-lit room I saw for the first time a man whose grey beard was smeared black with indigo and who sat cross-legged sucking his bubbling water-pipe. His face was hard and did not inspire confidence. He began the conversation by inviting me to stay some days more with the whole caravan. Saturday was market-day and then all sorts of wild beduin would come in from their far-away mountains and provide us with excellent material for photography. The suggestion was an attractive one but I said that unfortunately we were obliged to move on as we did not know how many difficulties might await us ahead. The old Sheikh started telling me of his political worries, of his complete independence of the Hukūma and what great efforts were required in order to maintain the peace with the surrounding tribes that had been concluded some months before. The end of much beating about the bush was that he, with much insistence on secrecy, asked for bakhshish! This old head of the family, our host, the Sheikh of his village begged for, even insisted on, a handsome gift of money over and above the usual presents. For a moment I was struck dumb. What a

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perversion of traditional Arabian hospitality. And by a chief, not a poor beduin! Was this the result of the payment of tolls by British officers and travellers who had money enough to buy off troubles and obstruction? Colonel Boscawen, known for his many and wide travels in the Hadhramaut, had recently called attention to the deplorable fact that one could no longer travel in the Aden Hinterland without "tipping" the chiefs of the territory one had to cross and added that it was high time this was changed.

Reluctantly I admitted to myself that here was an obstacle that could not be ignored. We were close to the Talh pass now and could not risk any opposition or menace from our rear. So we started an interminable haggling. I explained that we were not British officials who could draw in handfuls from the Public Treasury. We were foreigners bent on serving science and we had to pay for everything from our own slender resources. He should regard us quite differently from the British who belonged to the Hukūma. The old Sheikh asked for fifty Maria Theresa dollars. I offered five. Long explanations followed. Well, then, it would have to be ten. I made as though he was endangering the success of the whole trip but in the end gave him seven. I hoped that at least I succeeded in convincing him that robbing our caravan was scarcely worth while. The hospitality we had received here was not genuine: that had been offered by the other Sheikh, his rival. And as this one could not appear to do less than the other he too had come forward with an invitation but had had, at the same time, no scruple in violating the sacred law of hospitality or, like a common robber, in asking money for what was a national, even a religious, obligation and one that was held in high esteem and accomplished with pride even by the poorest in the land.

That night rain drove us from the small topmost roof of the high, narrow dwelling where we were trying to sleep away from the bugs and the stuffy heat. We were ready, early in the morning, to start the caravan moving. We had to hire new camels here: this was a condition the Sheikhs, our hosts, had explicitly stipulated. It was necessary too that we should get animals equal to the strenuous climbing of the Talh pass. In order to put an end to the talk we agreed to take eight camels although we were convinced that a smaller number would have been sufficient. Actually they produced ten and neither of the Sheikhs was willing to take back one of them. This led to a great uproar and finally one camel was sent away; the ninth one had to come with us although we declared that we would only pay for eight. As, however, from now on the country grew more and

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more wild we should probably have to sing a different tune in the very near future.

The caravan moved off at last. Hermann who had by far the most tiring job, usually started ahead of us, sometimes an hour before the rest of the party, accompanied by someone who knew the surroundings thoroughly. Often he was driven to despair by the impatience of his guides who did not understand why he wanted to know the name of every mountain, wadi, or group of houses, why these names had to be pronounced slowly and repeatedly, why every ten minutes they had to stop, take bearings and make sketches, and that this had to go on for hours at a stretch. Frequently, very soon after setting out, guides would give nonsensical answers or reply abruptly and insolently, and even run back to the caravan and thus lose the promised extra pay. We could understand such behaviour but it was none the less annoying and wasted much time for we could not move on until peace had been re-established between the cartographer and his guide. If that proved impossible another man had to be tried. When a deadlock was reached we could always appeal to our escort. They all liked Hermann and gradually began to understand his type of work so that when Muhsin, in his calm, deliberate way, started interrogating, trustworthy information was forthcoming even from a half-wild beduin. If it was not Muhsin then our clever Sālim "Al Maksūr" or the eager Muhammad "Al Majnūn" (the crazy) would in their rough but good-humoured way help to keep this exacting work of patience and precision going. Hermann's task was a nearly superhuman one. Proficiency in Arabic which he had lost after our first Hadhramaut expedition returned to him quickly thanks to this daily training. Dialectal pronunciation, which in all languages is specially present in geographical names, presented up to the end much difficulty and so many repetitions of the same words made the beduin we interrogated wonder whether we were sane. Hours of labour with numerous assistants in a drawing office are necessary before the material thus collected can be embodied in a map. But, with the production of this map, linking up with the map of the Hadhramaut published in my earlier book, those who know how much work the mapping of new country involves will appreciate with respect and gratitude the extent of the task Hermann performed single-handed. His work gave to our expedition a permanent value. The map-making of Hermann will receive only occasional mention during the course of this narrative—it is too uneventful to occupy a central place although that is what it deserves—but

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it was in the interest of cartography that our trip was chiefly undertaken and secured the whole-hearted support in Aden.

The morning was cool as we trekked on and the sky heavily clouded. Rain threatened but we were not to be deterred. The mysterious attraction of the Talh pass lured us on. Our glances wandered admiringly over the landscape. Around us the stunted trees of a dry climate were freshly washed by the heavy rains. The morning sun broke fitfully through the clouds and the earthy smell of the steaming soil mixed with the freshness of the budding plants. The suyūl had subsided and shrunk into streamlets through which we could easily wade. With quickening hearts we looked up to the huge mountain range on our left. The massive wall of previous days now appeared broken and we could see rocky spurs descending from the main mountain mass while, in front, isolated peaks stood sentinel. In the direction of the Talh the tops of the mountains were shrouded in clouds. The order of the day for the whole caravan was that we must push on to where the steep climbing began. Wet or dry, we had to get there. Rain would not matter so long as the camels did not slip dangerously.

We did get some showers of rain, our clothes became saturated but we went on and they dried on us. The temperature was so agreeable that walking was an unusual pleasure. The mountains to the left became more rugged while on our right were low, stony hills. Then a beduin of unpleasant type came towards us and asked where we were going and why we did not take camels and guides from his tribe. The escort dealt with him and we marched on.

There now came into view on the right a towering mass of rock which dominated the whole landscape. On its top was the stronghold of the Shuyūkh (plural of Sheikh) Mesurra and perched against its crumbling flanks were the tiny nests of piled-up stones where lived some half-settled beduin who came skipping down towards us with their rifles slung across their shoulders like yokes. They greeted us with a friendly clasp and pinch of the hand and bent as they made the sound of the kiss of greeting. Here it had been arranged that we should get our siyāras. All the men offered to come with us but although we appreciated their kindness we decided that it would be too expensive. So we took only two and with one of them walking ahead as guide the caravan moved on. The people here were full of gratitude to Allah for the bountiful rains. They cultivated fields when the rain was plentiful but for their principal means of livelihood relied on goats.

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A group of 'Awāliq from Yeshbum came towards us. Muhsin was from that place and so he met kinsmen. Their greeting was very cordial and did not include the firing of rifles. They formed a big circle and leaned on their weapons. Short, abrupt questions and similar answers were exchanged. This was a survival of ancient words and formalized expressions from past centuries. Ceremoniously and with solemn faces they shouted out this desert code: all were players in an age-old performance. The ritual over, the circle was broken and then friends could talk together freely. The caravan quietly went on, assured that those who had stayed behind would, with an untiring, unbroken trot, catch up with the train again.

We soon came to a plateau which lay as a no-man's-land between the territories of two tribes and was thus the place indicated by nature for the fighting of their feuds. None could pass here without an armed escort. Everybody we met carried a rifle.

Farther on, a mountain slope was pointed out to us as the scene of a raid in which 800 head of cattle had been carried off. Two graves beside the path attracted our attention because they were well looked after. The guide explained that here two enemies had met and shot each other at exactly the same moment, both being killed. This coincidence was regarded as the judgement of Allah and, as such, worthy of remembrance.

The guide now turned off in a northerly direction so that we marched straight towards the mountains. Often we followed wadi beds and gradually the vegetation increased with bushes giving way to small trees. The scent of fresh green plants filled the air. The place where we halted for the midday rest was specially attractive and here the wadi bed broadened into a wide valley. Against the western slope of the valley lay a huge boulder with a grotto at its base where we with our seven soldiers found a shady place to rest. Sālih, the cook, prepared for us half-an-inch-thick slabs of bread smeared with sesame oil. The escort and the beduin collected round stones, thrust them into their fire and made bread as before. Our meal was thus ready within a few minutes. This primitive food is very satisfying but heavy on the stomach. Though we had trekked from six in the morning until two in the afternoon these hot dollops of bread quickly satisfied our hunger and we were able to march on until the night bivouac. We went on immediately after the meal and entered into mountainous country of increasing beauty and majesty. Through wadis strewn with huge boulders, we quickly gained height. Flat stretches became more and more rare. When we came upon them we found traces of human beings

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who had lived there or fought there, and of some who had found there eternal rest. These graveyards were reminders of beduin wars fought because of feuds between tribes. Such wars never ended but called for fresh retaliation and for continued shedding of blood. That is the tragedy of revenge: it has no end and brings no peace but plunges the participants deeper and deeper into the lust of blood for blood.

The caravan now reached the first 'aqaba, the name given in Arabia to mountain passes which in this part of the peninsula are invariably very steep.

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THE 'Aqabat al-Marmā was our first heavy climb. In view of all that awaited us the next day the men of the caravan preferred to master this first 'aqaba before sunset. No decision could have been more welcome to us but there was risk in the choice. Once started with the loaded camels on that narrow, winding, rocky path we should have to continue to the top of the pass. Then after a short descent we should be able to reach a place where there would be sufficient shelter from the keen mountain air and sufficient camping-space for both man and beast. The decision to go on seemed to have the approval of the whole caravan for all set to work immediately and there was little talking. We at once split up into groups of two camels tied together and the loads were checked and re-fastened. Then the leader with the best-trained camels went ahead and the remaining groups followed maintaining a reasonable distance between each other. Every camel-man kept close contact with his animals and encouraged them with some typical melody and rhythm. The camels listened and followed, prudently placing the flat cushions of their long legs on the narrow rocky path. We heard them scratching their way over the dry boulders, slipping occasionally as stones rolled away beneath them and then struggling to retain their balance. The loud refrain of the leader would then rise in encouragement and the animals, reassured, would struggle on. Bend after bend was slowly mastered. When the turns were sharp the men had to go carefully so as to manoeuvre clear of the protruding boulders the loads that stuck far out on the side of each camel. Orders to be careful on the left or on the right side seemed to be understood by the camels and they unwieldily turned slowly aside feeling for a safe footing even when with their own eyes the animals could not see why the order had been given. All our attention was concentrated on the camels because they had far the most difficult task. It seemed in flagrant contradiction to his nature that the camel, who was endowed with a body wonderfully adapted to hot sandy plains, should be made to climb steep, rocky paths, strewn with loose stones that rolled away before him as he went. And we had

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greatly added to his difficulties in raising his centre of gravity still higher above the ground by piling heavy loads on top of his already abnormally high back. And so we watched the toiling camels closely so that we might be ready to lend a hand if one of them should slip back and ready, too, to jump clear if need be. We forgot our own fatigue in our admiration for the camels and for their leaders. This was only a foretaste of what awaited us the next day but for a preliminary test the caravan stood it well.

The higher we went the cooler the breeze and the more magnificent the views southwards over the spurs of the mountain range with its lonely sentinel peaks in the plain through which we had trekked. All traces of human habitation had long since been left behind us. We were alone and the mountain whose flanks towered over us seemed to be pushing obstructions into our way. In the silence of this world of mountain, wind and thunder-clouds we were conscious of our own insignificance and awed by this solitude. The proximity of other human beings was a comfort. The melodious calls of the beduin and of the soldiers echoing back from the rocky walls were a reassuring challenge to the surrounding grandeur and stillness. The urge to keep that great silence at a distance seemed to possess the Arabs for the first night we spent alone among the mountains was so disturbed by singing and story-telling that we found but little sleep.

We camped at a place called Bā Khudeish which was where the wadi bed again widened. The rain that had held us up in the plain had filled the rocky cavities with water, cool and crystal clear. Each of us picked out his little pool and enjoyed a well-merited wash with soap. Small fish had been able to survive in these bowls and frogs unexpectedly plunged into them or broke the silence with their harsh croaking. Bā Khudeish was about 3,200 feet above sea level. The wind that whistled through the wadi turned the already cool air colder as the night wore on but the good start we had made in climbing the 'aqaba gave us confidence for the task that was to be tackled next day. When the evening meal was finished, the soldiers stirred the smouldering embers and began to perform a dance by fire-light, to the accompaniment of singing and the clapping of hands and the stamping of naked feet that followed the rhythm of the song. After the dance the beduin had their turn with passionate danā songs of a pattern known to all but varied according to individual taste or inspiration. The greater part of these songs were doubtless improvised. The caravan men sang them with raucous voices that were only tolerable when heard from a

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distance. Some of the soldiers however sang in soft, melodious tones ending their verses with a half-swallowed sob. We could not help imitating them and joined in chorus with an enormous sob, a contribution that was greeted with bursts of laughter. It was late when, at our request, the singing stopped. Guards were set and the remainder tried to keep warm and sleep. Overhead the menacing clouds were carried along by the wind and occasionally a shower of rain passed through the wadi, light, but enough to make us realize how miserable it would be if it began to pour. These showers interrupted our sleep and, although some of us dozed off again, many of the caravan men became so cold under a thin cotton wrap or sacking from the luggage that they preferred to sit and talk with the guards and wait for morning to dawn. When the morning came we had to put on clothes that were saturated with dew and icy cold. With stiff legs and aching feet we began to walk about between the pieces of luggage, poking the sluggards and trying to stir them into action.

Hermann was the conscience of the caravan. He had a big alarm-watch that woke him before the rest. Mercilessly he would make us rise. We all then made life so uncomfortable for the cook that in the end he too would be forced to get up. The beduin were the most difficult to rouse, particularly when they had been singing until late into the night and when the morning was not so cold as to prevent their sleeping. They lay like logs and clearly had no stomach for the job of collecting the camels which usually strayed far away during the night. This task therefore often fell to the caravan-boy although he was still only a child. If he was not successful in finding all the animals the men would join in the search.

While the cook was making tea Hermann would be busy with the instrument with which he determined the local boiling-point, a work which had to be done twice in every camp in order to calculate the exact height of a place above sea level. Steaming porridge and hot tea then brought the first quarter of an hour's happiness of the day. The Arabs tackled their daily task on an empty stomach. Some of them performed the *salât*. As soon as the camels were brought in the luggage, which by then had been packed, would be fastened on their backs.

I used to sit on a boulder from where I could overlook the camp and in the early morning light would write my diary. Normally Hermann would be the first to leave with his guide, then the camels would follow with the escort, and I would come last to make sure that nothing had been forgotten and that a good marching pace was maintained.

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On the day of the Talh climb no orders or encouragement were necessary. It was a day of trekking through empty territory where many a war had been fought and where ambushes were a common occurrence. The beduin cemeteries we passed in the course of the day were evidence of what had happened there. Marching in close formation with every eye and ear strained, we worked our way upwards united by the same desire—to get through. Every now and then the guide would walk on ahead in order to reconnoitre the country before us. Muhsin, too, went off by himself and climbed, now to the side, now in front, going from vantage point to vantage point from which he could overlook the toiling camels.

There was now more vegetation and more animal life. In these high altitudes there must be moisture the whole year round. The winds that blow from the Indian Ocean are checked by this mountain range which is between six and nine thousand feet high and precipitates rainfall. A large species of bird, which the guide called *ya'kūb*, had made its appearance near the last camp and on the march we saw rabbits and many birds resembling pigeons. Flowers, bushes and even trees grew on either side. Blossoming adeniums (*Adenium obesum*) and many aloes, even the pole-stemmed aloe (*Aloe sabaea*) with its brightly-coloured bunches of flowers, reminded us of the mountains of the Yemen which catch the rain-bearing clouds.

From the wadi bed which we had followed we came to a winding path that climbed a rocky spur called the 'Aqabat al-Kibd, or, according to the local pronunciation, the 'Aqabat am-Kibd. The climb was now becoming difficult. The camels worked well and their leaders were alert and attentive. Their words of warning and encouragement were not lacking for a moment. Their shouts rebounded from the huge, bare precipice at our side and the small caravan advanced amidst a whirl of echoes. The *siyāra* who led us, and who was responsible for our safety so long as we were in the territory of his tribe, was a slender, sinewy beduin with a twinkle in his eye. He stopped at a point where a side-track met our path and waited for Hermann and me. Would we follow him a moment along the side-track? Of course we would. He then brought us to a place where, under a huge overhanging rock, there was a typical halting-place for beduin. Many traces of camping showed that it was used as such. The *siyāra* pointed to a stone near which there was a dark stain on the ground. Did we know what that was? No. That was blood! A month and a half before one of their men had been basely murdered while the caravan of which he was the guide was resting. The murderer had secretly stolen near. Nobody had seen him. He had

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knelt behind this boulder and fired. The siyāra, hit in the back, fell down and bled to death. The murderer fled and escaped. The recollection of the offence overcame the narrator and he told his story hurriedly and with passion. Would the Hukūma in Aden tolerate such outrages? Would we tell this to the "Kurnel" (Colonel) and ask him why he had not yet sent an aeroplane to punish the murderer and his tribe?

We answered that we considered the deed cowardly and loathsome and unworthy of anyone who called himself a man. But why did he complain? Was this not quite normal? Was not it their law? Was not revenge their rule? Yes, there was some truth in that long ago in war they had killed an 'Aulaqi and now one of them had taken revenge in this way. Why then did he complain? According to his law of retaliation the tribe had been revenged.

This is what we said but in our hearts we agreed with him. In his words we heard the cry of a man who had lost a friend and an innocent comrade who had become a victim of cowardly slaughter. Here we encountered the deep conviction of the beduin that British help was needed to put an end to a system that perpetuated bloodshed. Our siyāra was right. The Hukūma in Aden should know of this and in the end would come and free these beduin from their interminable fighting. The Hukūma would bring here too the Pax Britannica: the Aden hinterland has long waited for it.

After the 'Aqabat am-Kibd came that of the "little Kibd", the 'Aqabat am Kubaik. Beyond lay a stretch of gently sloping mountain-side where we could take our midday rest which the camels particularly merited. We felt that we were no longer far from the head of the pass. Men and animals halted in the thin shade of some old, weather-beaten acacias, here called sumr. The sun was burning hot, and strong gusts of wind blew away the blankets we had spread over the umbrella-shaped crowns of the acacias in order to increase the shade.

The Talh pass was on our right. It crossed a dark, deeply-indented, extensive mountain-ridge that sloped down to the distant plain. Clouds hid the sides of the pass from view. Looking back we could see that the plain down below was in full sunshine. In front of the mountain range which we were climbing the hills through which our path had wound lay spread out. Farther to the south the land was flat towards the sea. A few flat-topped mountains stood detached from their surrounding belt of hills and seen from here they looked black. Possibly they were small extinct volcanoes.

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Our rest was a short one. We had not only to cross the pass and the succeeding *nejd* (high plateau) but also to descend the north side of the mountain range. The lower we went, the better would be our protection from the rough blasts of the wind at night. After climbing a good hour we reached the head of the pass, the *ras al-'aqaba*, which proved to be 6,100 feet above sea level. East and west of us the summits of the Talh range rose a thousand feet higher. We moved on to the high plateau where we entered a different country. The southern part of the plateau caught the rain-bringing sea-breezes. The north side seemed to get little. It was undulating country strewn with shining, bare boulders shot with red and yellow. A type of tree was growing here that by its shape and ubiquity gave the landscape its distinctive character. Here was the land of the *talh* (probably the Abyssinian mountain acacia). Only these old, bent acacias had been able to stand up to the rigours of this land of rock and stone where night and day the gusty wind howled. Caravans shunned this ghostly land or tried to cross it as quickly as possible and escape its biting winds. Hence the talh trees here were not used for firewood or for camel fodder and reached a great age. With short, gnarled stems like chunks of rock they stretched their flat crowns low above the rocky soil, their thorny branches pointing in the direction of the eternally merciless winds. A mournful land, this domain of the talh, where beduin graves were the only reminder of the passing of men.

After the painful exertions of the whole day's climbing our aching limbs and feet found comfort in regular easy motion on the level ground. The dry wind cooled us and dried our perspiring bodies. We could even increase our pace for everyone knew the importance of spending the night in more sheltered country some hundreds of feet lower down. The sun was already low when we reached the beginning of a wadi. Here we could find our way alone so the *siyāra* went off with two men in search of water, each of the three carrying an empty *qirba* (water-skin). Meanwhile the caravan hurried on over the stones of the wild wadi bed. Our haste must have resembled a flight from the inclemency of the lonely heights where evil spirits lived in the clouds and winds, where the traveller saw no men but only passed their graves. If we were not affected by the solitude of these wind-swept mountain tops with their old talhs bowed in their struggle against the ceaseless wind our beduin certainly were: skipping over the boulders they urged their camels down the wadi, closer to the inhabited world. Darkness at last obliged us to halt and pitch a camp in a place where

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the wadi bed widened. On both sides the rocks rose perpendicularly and gave the wadi the form of a tunnel through which the wind roared. All hurriedly set to work. Stones were cleared away to make sleeping-places; the caravan men climbed the rocks to add more camel fodder to that which they had already collected during the march while the soldiers went off in the search of dead wood for a big camp fire. We expected the night to be a cold one. The soldiers received much help from some men who had joined our caravan in order to pass through unsafe territory under our protection. One young man who was always ready to lend a hand had followed us since Lōdar. He was travelling in the company of an older man. They had set out from the Yemen together and had been walking a month already. The old fellow came from Ibb and was known in the caravan as ash-Sheiba (the old one); the young man came from Kokobān and was called Kokobāni. He now followed the men who had gone to fetch firewood and carried with him an axe and a rope. Together they attacked some primeval half-dead acacias. The wood was dry and brittle and an axe made little impression on it. So the branches were pounded with heavy stones and, if they would not break, a rope was thrown over one part of them and with much powerful jerking to the accompaniment of a working-song, gnarled fragments were torn down. With loud cheers these lumps were dragged to the camp and presently two fires flared up.

We were in the Sha'b (cleft) Na'mān, still in a sort of no-man's-land. Next morning we hoped to contact again the inhabited world. We did not know how it would be disposed towards us and for that reason Muhsin posted guards and himself slept very little. After the evening meal all who were off duty prepared to protect themselves as well as they could against the raw wind. The camp-fire smouldered and the bulky stumps of wood glowed red as the gusts of wind blew over the camp: they would burn throughout the night warming the beduin who lay curled up close to the fire. The climbing of the Talh precluded any repetition of the exuberance of the night before and the tired caravan soon settled down to sleep. The wind roared through the rocky wadi gap: the camels crouched close by, chewed their thorny fodder and breathed an occasional deep sigh.

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THE Sha'b Na'mān merged into the Wadi Hatīb, whose sides receded so far that on the loess terraces alongside the wadi bed agriculture was possible for the tribe of Fat-hān who lived there. Sheikh 'Abdallah was their ruler. We required his permission to pass through to Jābir. Beyond Jābir we should be in the land of the Rabīzī tribe which was at that moment engaged in fighting a war. Here they used the kinder word *rabsha* that seemed to have the meaning of "quarrel". No difficulty was anticipated with Sheikh 'Abdallah but one never knew: wars can be contaminating.

On Sunday morning the second of April the caravan passed through the now gently sloping Wadi Hatīb. As the wadi widened we passed the first irrigation dyke of big stones forming an inlet for irrigation channels. When a seil flowed down the wadi the dyke would catch part of the water and lead it into a channel that carried it to the fields situated in the inner bends of the wadi, safe from the torrents. The fields were here called *tīn*, which means loam, from the soil of which they were composed. These loam-fields were well tilled and laid out in terraces. It was an agreeable surprise for us to find this proof of an older civilization on the border of countries whose present claim to fame arose from war, that arch-enemy of agriculture. As we advanced the fields increased in number and extent. On the side of the wadi above the fields stone huts had been built to shelter guards for the time when the crops were ripening. Now, however, the earth was covered with a thick layer of fine dust into which our feet sank noiselessly. Presently we came to another valley with fortresses lining the hill-tops. The whole of the bed of this valley was divided into fields where here and there a peasant was ploughing. For the rest there was complete silence and nothing stirred.

We had to wait for Sheikh 'Abdallah whom the *siyāra* had gone ahead to warn. It was, however, not long before one of the bastions came to life. Messengers were seen to be running between the buildings on the hill top and soon a bunch of indigoe men, armed with rifles, came in our direction. From other fortresses other men came, walking through the



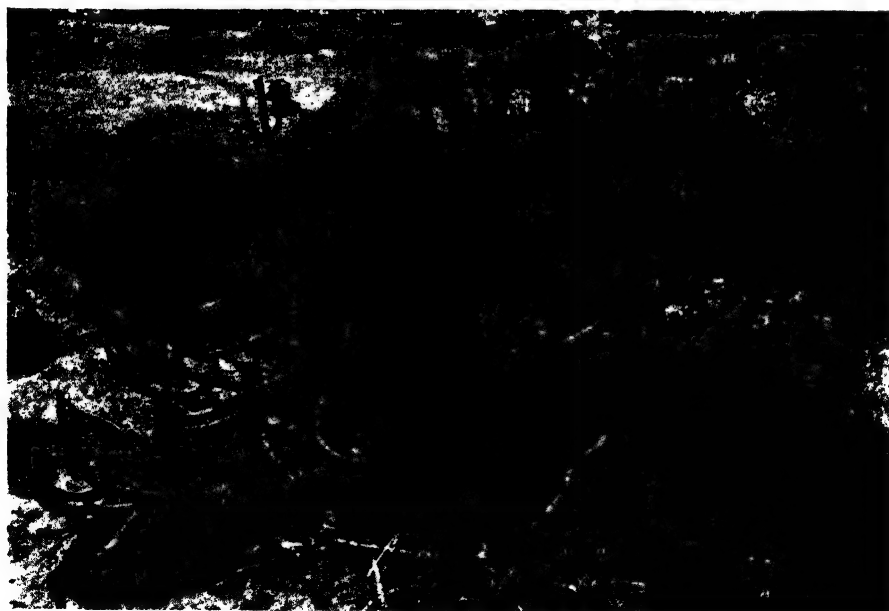
1. Wind-pattern in the sand. (Probably *Aeluropus repens* or *Odyssea micronata*.)



2. *The new motor road from Shugra to the 'Audhilla country. It is crossing an old lava flow. A volcanic cone in the background, a wadi bed in front.*



Women drawing water from the well at Bir Lamas.



4. *Carallum.*
5. *Euphorbia.*



6. *The Sultan's castle at Az-Zāra near Lōdar.*

7. *The escarpment of the southern Yemeni plateau seen from Az-Zāra.*



8. *Looking eastward from Lōdar to the pegmatite
sugar-loaf shaped peaks of Dhirb and Qal'a.*



9. A seil-bed of the Dathina country looking towards the pegmatite peaks east of Mas'ām. Tamarisk trees are characteristic of this part of the country.



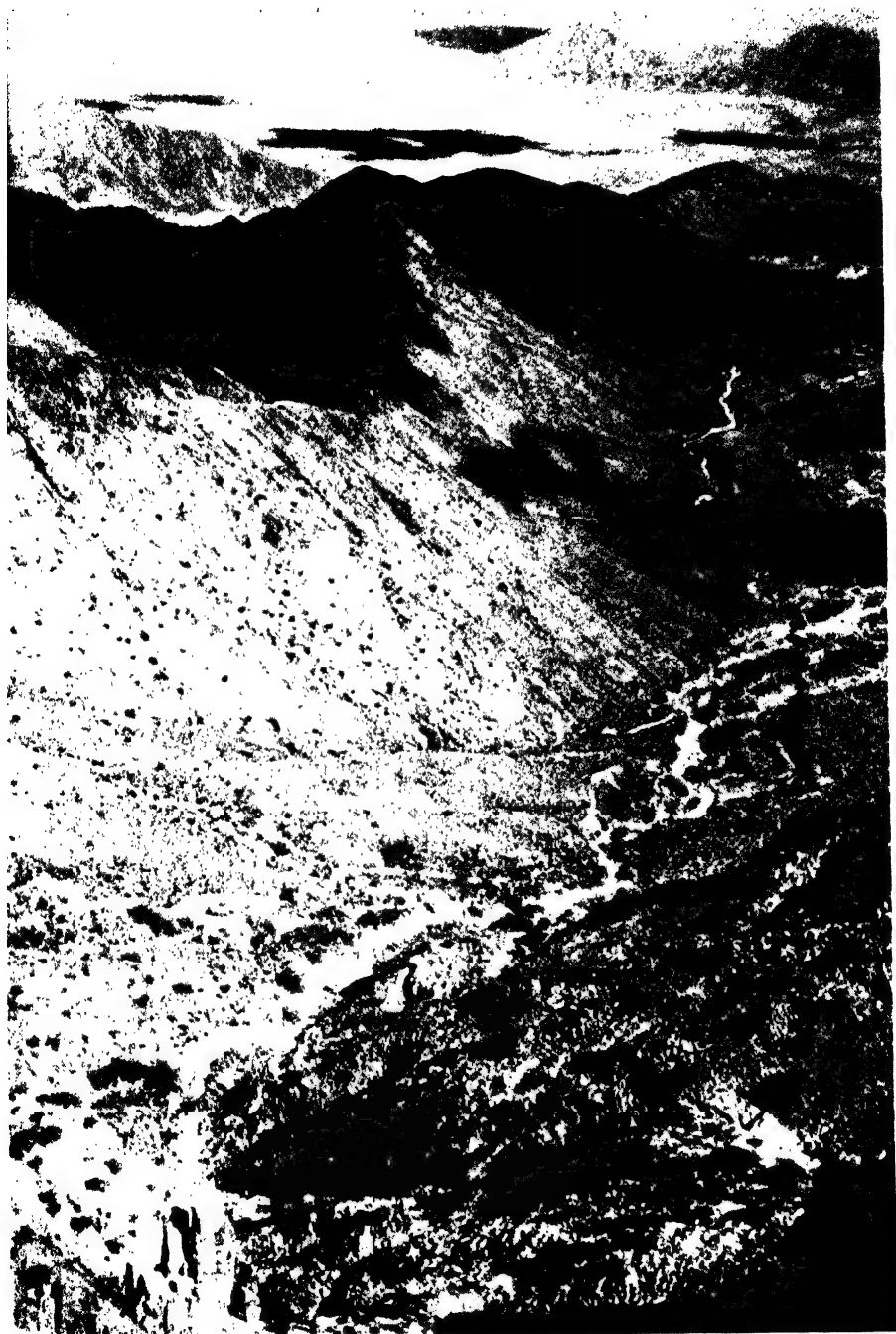
10. *The feldspar mountain peak of Qal'a, near Lōdar*



11. *The caravan approaching 'Aqaba Talh.*



12. *A shelter on the slope of the 'Aqaba Thire' pass leading to the Yemen plateau from Az-Zāra.*



13. Looking south from the 'Thirc' to the lowlands of Lower 'Audhilla.



14. Red flowers (*Liliaceae*) on the steep slopes of the 'Thiré' pass.



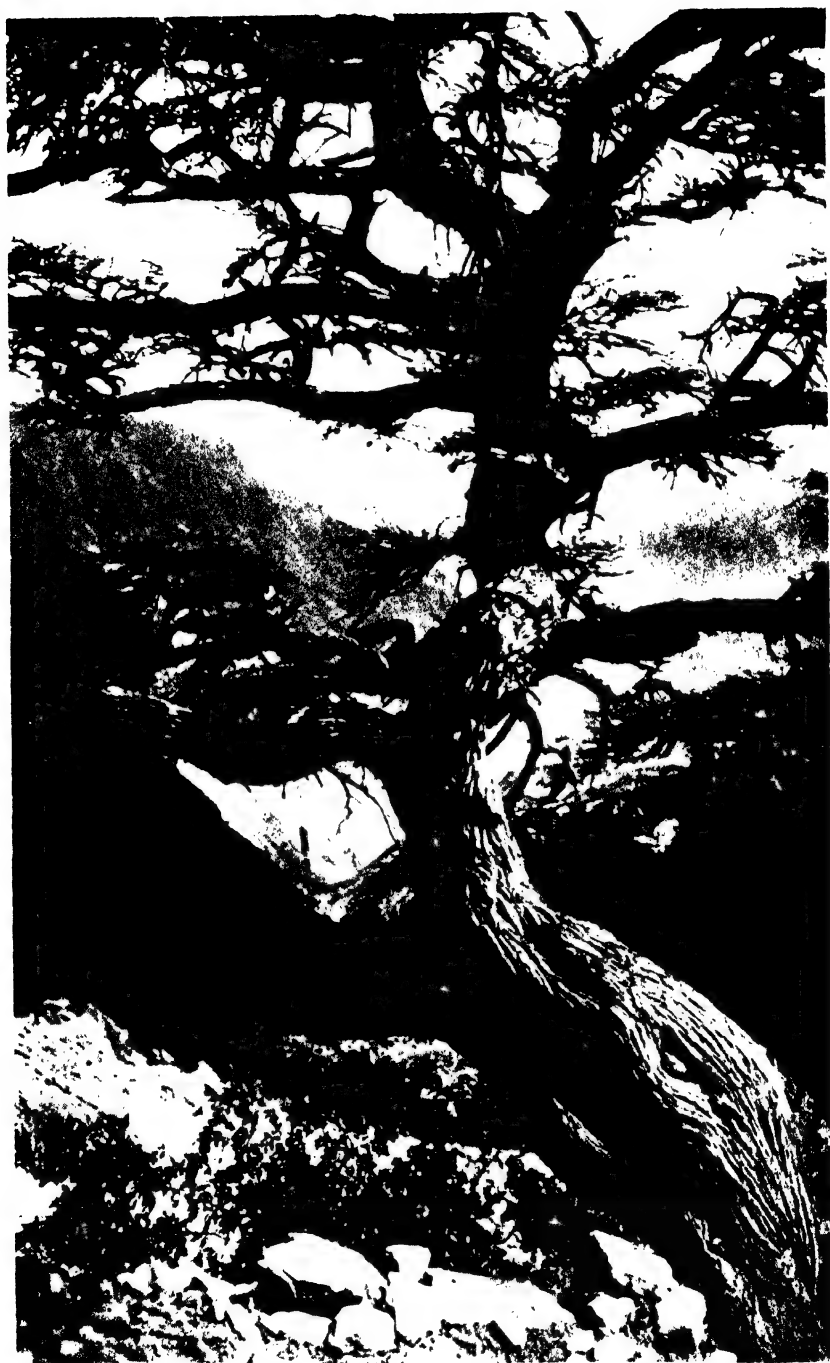
15. *Barleria spinicyma* (Acanthaceae) with orange flowers on the slopes of the 'Tuire' pass.



16. *From 'Aqaba Talh's summit to the distant plain of el Fejj*



17. The husn of Sheikh 'Abdallah in the Wadi Hatib, with 'ishr (*Calotropis*) and tamarisk trees.



18. *A mountain acacia at the summit of 'Aqaba Talli.
The leaves of the acacia are used for tanning leather.*



19. Sheikh 'Abdallah holding a spear, the sign of his position as sheikh of his tribe in Wadi Hatib.



20. *The village of Jābir in Wadi Hatib.*



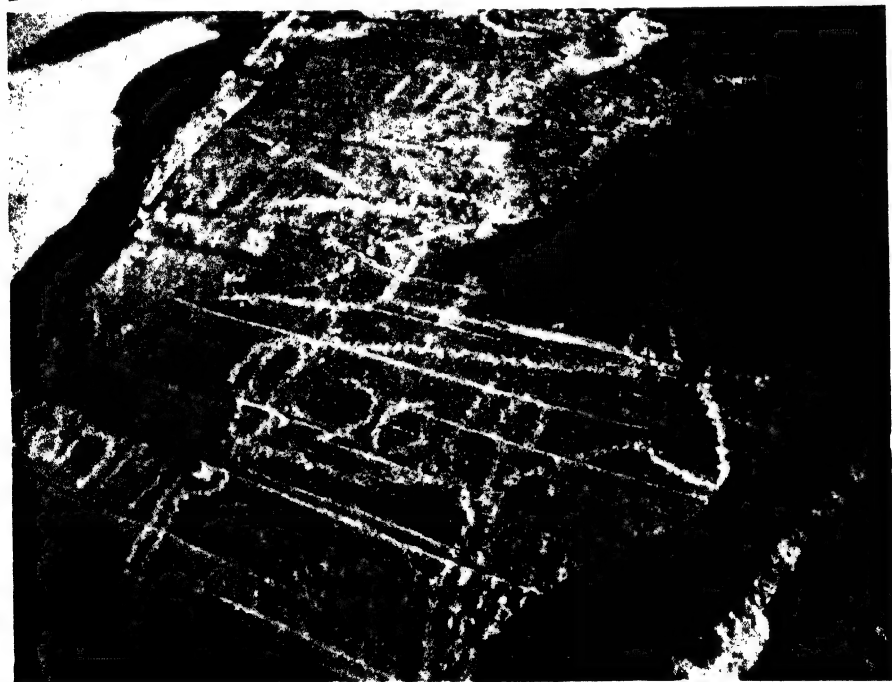
21. *Jābir and Wadi Hatīb between their mountain walls.*



22. *A myrrh tree in the mountains, nick-named Bīlad ash-Shaitān ("the devil's own country").*



23. *The marble hill of Qarn as-Surrān. The
hill of el-Hadid in the background.*



24. "Modern" paintings on rocks in the Dathūna country.
 25. Himyaritic drawings on the marble hill north-east of Nisāb.

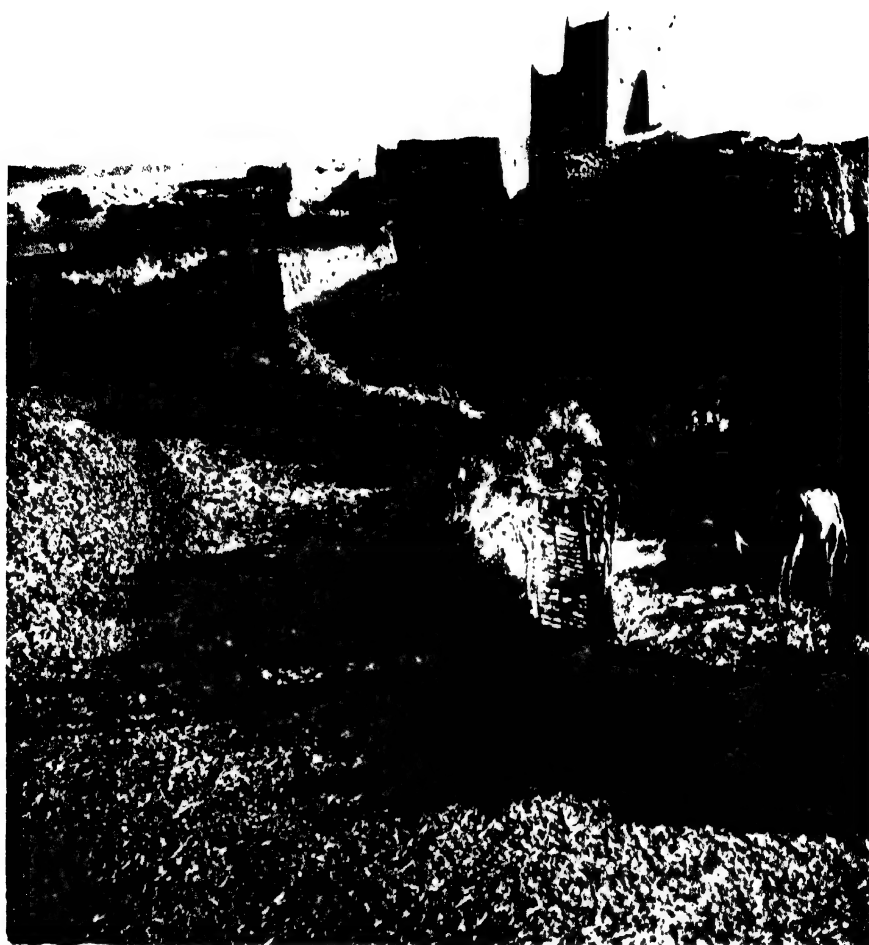


26. *From the summit of Qubar, looking across the sand and gravel desert zone of the North.*
 27. *The gravel plain, now barren, at the foot of Qubar mountain north-west of Ansāb.*

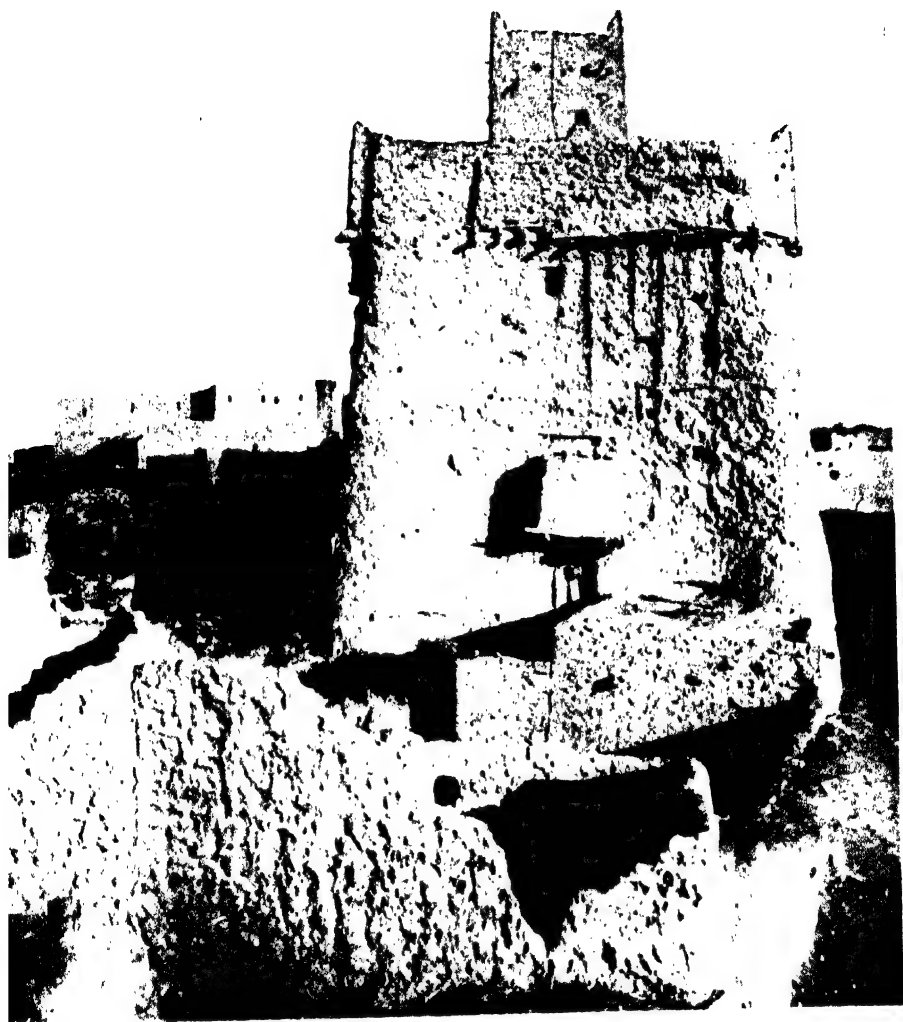




29. The scil-bed of the Wadi Jirdān approaching the hamlets of 'Amīq.
The *Zizyphus spina christi* trees seen in this photograph are,
apart from a few date palms, the only fruit trees in the district.



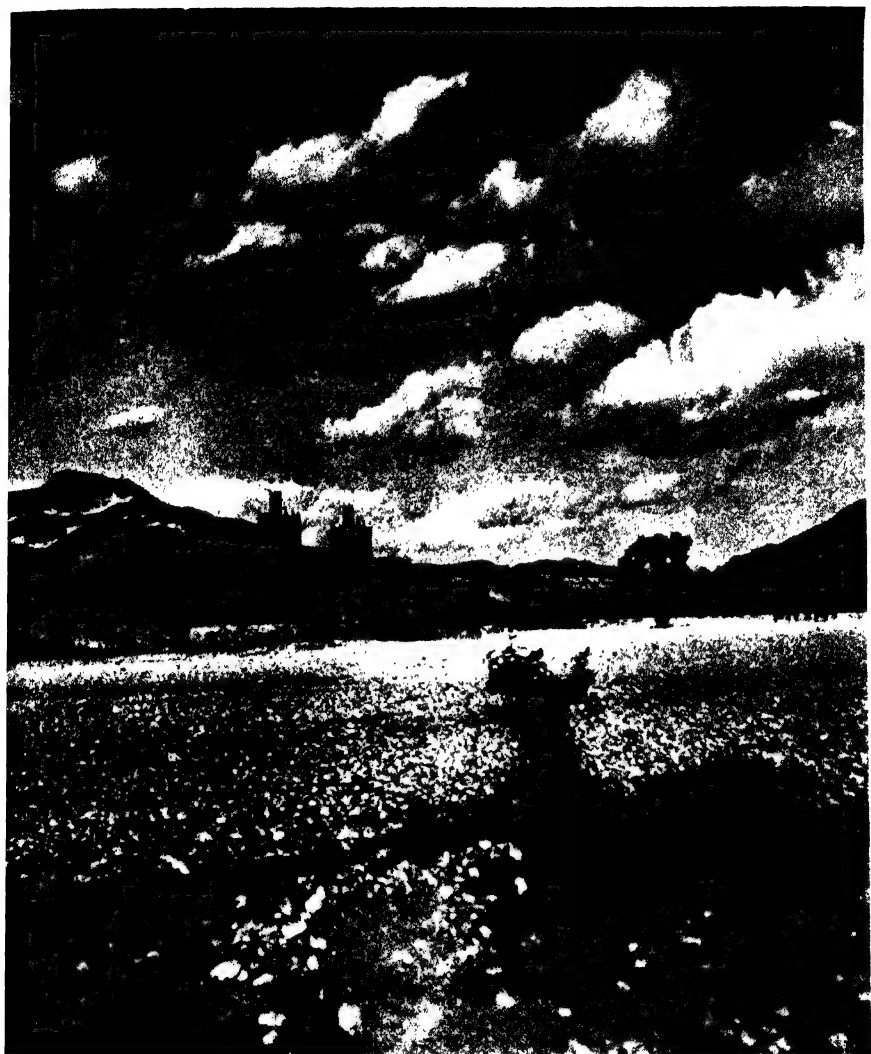
30. A square mud tower in 'Ayād.



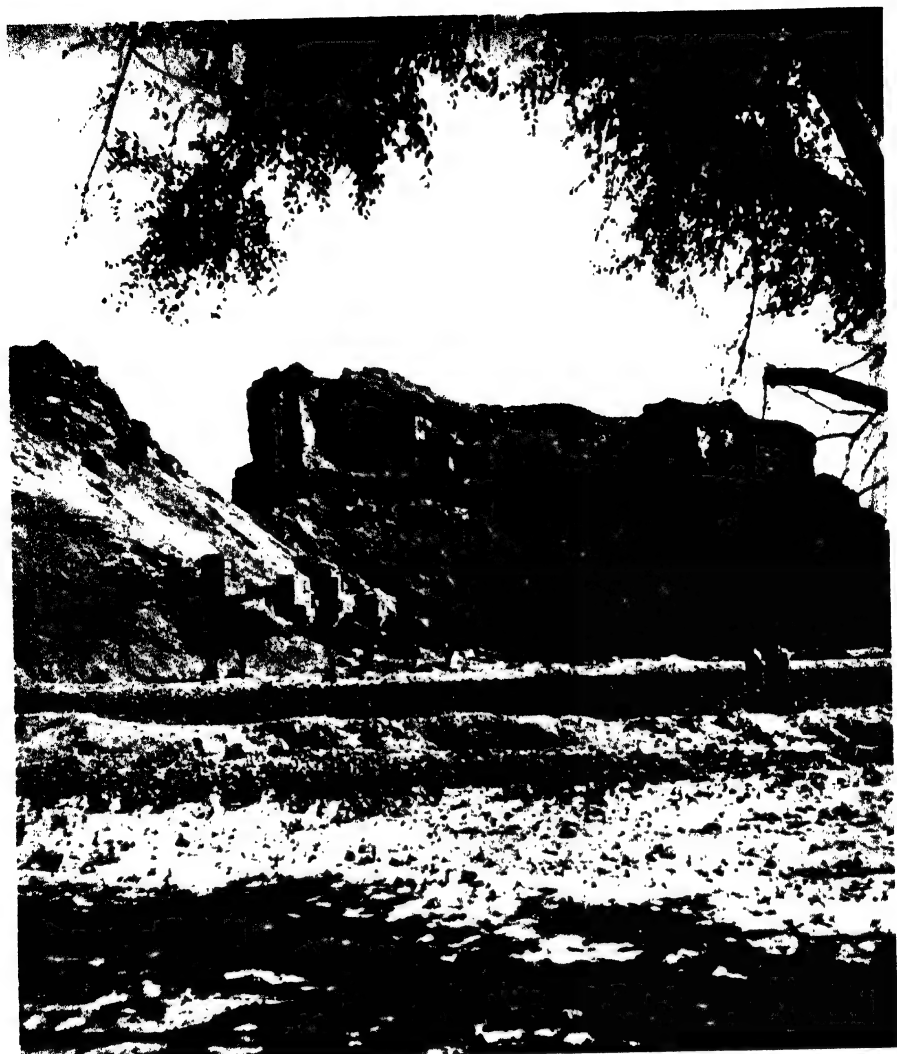
31. 'Ayād's fortified tower with a living-room on its roof-top.

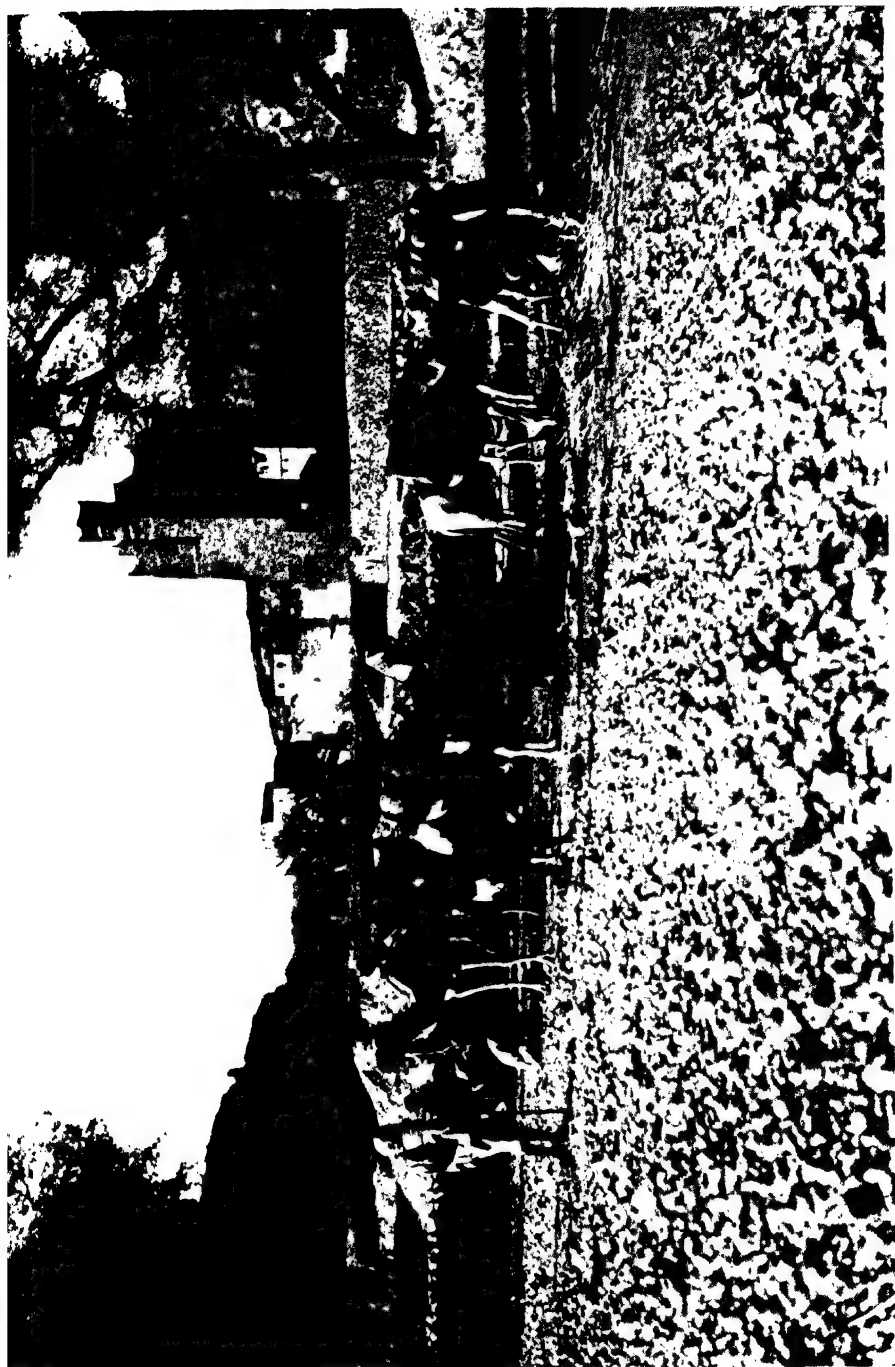


32. *Husn ed-Daḳīqe in upper Wadi Jirdān : one of the watch-towers built on the lip of the cliff.*



33. *The upper hamlet of 'Anīq. Here every isolated house is a fortress, and every village dominated by two or more watch-towers.*





35. *The caravan camp near Husn an-Nuqaiyib in Wadi Jirdān.
Stone walls protect the fields from the seil.*



36. *Loess walls and channels irrigating the fields in Wadi Jirdān.*

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ploughed fields until they gradually formed a long row alongside our caravan.

They fired several shots of welcome. On our side there was no shooting but much handshaking as a demonstration of our peaceful intentions. The ceremonial welcome was orderly and dignified. Then negotiations began. It soon became evident that progress was going to be difficult. Sheikh 'Abdallah had not yet arrived; we were told that he was very old and it was doubtful whether he would come at all. They all now began to speak at once and to raise their voices higher and higher. We understood that they were dissatisfied with the Hukūma. They reproached it for not fulfilling a promise to establish peace in the country and along its trade routes. Further on the roads were closed because of war; insecurity had spread to their territory; trade and traffic had been brought to a standstill and their losses grew every day. Our explanation that we were not the Hukūma and had nothing to do with it did not help us at all. The complaints were simply repeated more and more vociferously until they ended in a general scream. The chorus increased in volume and we saw that they were working themselves up into a tumult of excitement in which an inconsiderate action might easily occur. Muhsin took a firm stand. He did belong to the Hukūma and had to answer their complaints. He did it with tact and energy and said that we, travellers from a foreign country (here we were called *sarākīl*), had nothing to do with all that, but simply asked for free passage through their country.

A welcome diversion presented itself when in the distance a new group of blue-black men moved in our direction preceded by a bent little fellow with long silvery hair who was leaning on the old national weapon, a long spear. It was the Sheikh 'Abdallah himself. His retinue fired several shots as should be done in welcoming strangers. Handshakes followed and then in a sympathetic silence the Sheikh started his speech. Alas, his gentle preliminaries soon changed into incrimination of the distant Hukūma; his reproaches were uttered in an angry voice and with growing agitation that ended in hysterical cries which shook his frail old body. This was a sign for his followers to join in screaming and raising their fists and rifles. Pandemonium broke loose. Our escort was not a success here. Their tribes seemed to have committed many acts of war in these parts. That was the reason why Hermann and I, who with the two others stood looking coldly on in silence, were dragged into the dispute. At first we could not understand a word of what they told us because they were over-excited and

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shouted too loudly. In the end it became clear that they desired us to send a message immediately to the Hukūma urging that action should be taken to establish *amn* (security) in these countries and specially on the trade-routes. The misery caused by a war in the neighbourhood seemed to be great and we realized how much the intervention of a strong power could mean. Great Britain had aroused expectations and will have to fulfil them in the days to come.

I promised to write a letter to the "Kurnel" in Aden. They were not entirely satisfied with this postponement of action but gradually the outburst of emotional rage subsided as it encountered no opposition. But the performance had a sequel.

The old Sheikh, pulling at my sleeve, took me with him to a quiet place where we were alone. How much were we going to pay for free passage? I explained to him that we really did not belong to the Hukūma and so could not pay nearly as much as they, the British, did. I offered five Maria Theresa dollars; he asked for fifty. Little by little I increased up to ten but then had to haggle with the *siyāra* for this tribe's territory who was not to be satisfied with five dollars. We did not know whether we should get something substantial for this money, or, in other words, how long the stretch of road was for which we were buying safe conduct. They were shrewdly evasive in their information about the extent of their tribal territory. The dispute between our Aden escort and the gathered people was still in full swing when the Sheikh gave the sign that we might be allowed to go on. The old chief walked along with me and strove to calm the rage of his followers who were still wrangling with our soldiers. He seemed very content with the unexpected ten dollars which his son was to receive on our safe arrival at the border of their territory. Before he took his leave and entrusted the leadership to his son he once more reminded us of the letter that was to be written to the Hukūma. I promised him that I would send a report and told him that I could make it more effective and convincing by putting his *taswīr* (photograph) on it. That was unpleasant, perhaps even dangerous, for throughout his long lifetime he had never yet taken such a risk. But the younger people, among them his son, approved of the idea. So our lenses were soon directed on Sheikh 'Abdallah and his unruly suite. The old chief clung to his spear as defence against this devil's work and his emotion caused the long blade to quiver. Sheikh 'Abdallah then turned back to his fortified house on the hill-top and his son came forward and took my hand Arab fashion. We walked together thus

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in front of the caravan and so escaped the wearisome noise of the harsh disputing voices.

The valley became narrower again and a fine, now dry, irrigation conduit formed our path. Many *ithl* and *'ilb* were growing here and well tilled fields occupied the available loamy soil on the bottom of the wadi bed. Much sooner than we expected we reached the neutral zone of no-man's-land between their territory and the next. So all that disputing and a great part of the excitement had been staged in order to extract from us a high toll for passing through their lilliputian land. How thankful we now were that their menacing play-acting had only squeezed from us a miserable fifteen dollars. They had played their part well but we had stood our ground and so could say goodbye to them as equals.

Without a guide we crossed the low watershed that formed the no-man's-land between two small tribes. As we marched over the last sandy ridge we looked into a broadening of the valley. The noisy people from Hatib had drifted back leaving us alone in a wonderful silence. Just in front of us lay a deep-green field of ripening *burr* (barley). This wealth of freshness and fertility was possible thanks to permanent irrigation from a well on the edge of the field. A camel and a donkey were working the screeching pulley. Farther on we saw a border of grey-green *ithl* along the wadi-bed. On higher sloping ground was the village of Jābir with its dominating castle protectingly overlooking the small valley domain. The low houses that ranged round the castle were strongly built of stone. Jābir reminded us of a medieval European settlement. Lower down the slope, outside the village, stood a qubba with a high pointed cupola skilfully constructed in hewn stone. The memory of a saintly forbear was honoured and kept alive by it. Alongside was the burial place with piles of stones over each of the graves. At the foot of the hill were more fields, some with crops of barley.

The road descended the valley. We walked slowly up to some tall *'ilb* trees directly opposite the fortress. Here the camels were made to crouch and were unloaded for there was no question of going on. Two men of the escort, Sālim and 'Awadh, had been sent ahead to fetch the Sheikh of Jābir who seemed to live farther on. With him we should have to negotiate for our passage through his country but, even more important, we hoped to get information from him about his neighbours, the warriors of the Rabizi tribe. He would have to mediate for us or at any rate bring us into contact with them. We waited in the sun-speckled shade of the

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village 'ilb sitting between our pieces of luggage which were spread in disorderly fashion over the ground.

We were not left to wait undisturbed. Half the village ran out to view the unusual spectacle. Men and children crowded round us, kicking up clouds of dust that were blown over us by the breeze. No invitation came from the husn offering hospitality. By giving us a cup of coffee they would confer on us protection. They seemed to prefer to wait and see what was going to happen. In any case they kept the way open for rounding on us and setting upon us as enemies. But by leaving us by the roadside, sitting in the dust, they transgressed most manifestly the law of hospitality towards the stranger. We were envious of the two poor creatures from the Yemen who owned nothing but the shabby clothes they stood up in, who had lived on us but who were accepted here as brothers and found a protecting roof, rest and security in the village mosque. We constantly had to change our places in order to keep out of the sun. Slowly the time crept on: that day of ill foreboding seemed never to draw to an end. And when night fell should we have to lie down in the whirling dust, a peep-show for every unmannerly onlooker?

Just as the sun was setting Sālim and 'Awadh at last reappeared accompanied by the son of the Sheikh whose territory we had to cross. He was quite a child and could obviously take no responsibility for anything. He had clearly been sent on purpose: the Sheikh wanted to temporize. With this child we could neither negotiate nor march on. So here we were stuck. Our soldier protectors and advisers looked dejected. Various plans were suggested, except for turning back—that we would not consider. Would it not be possible to go round this unhospitable territory? There seemed to exist a path through the surrounding rocky mountains but nobody had ever tried to taken laden camels along it. The Jābir people thought it might thus take us five days to reach Nisāb while if we could carry on through the wadi we should be there in an easy two days. If we tried the detour we should have to pay passage money to other tribes whose territory we should pass and several guides would have to be hired. Muhsin opposed this desperate plan and seeing no way out himself suggested that we should send word to his Captain in Aden and wait here for help to be sent. This we could not do. We had promised the authorities in Aden not to ask for assistance. And how could they help us? No, Muhsin, we were not going to be beaten! We must try to negotiate. If only we could establish contact with the trouble-makers! Then we could

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work with our Maria Theresa dollars and go up to the highest bid we could offer.

We were thus stuck in Jābir although the real barrier lay farther ahead. We could not approach the obstruction and face our adversary. Our dark forebodings had become a hard reality. Muhsin and his comrades were in despair and seemed to have lost hope. They looked upon our optimism as foolish and it jarred on them. Silently we trailed off to the sandy bed of the wadi where the Jābir authorities allowed us to pitch our camp. The scil bed here followed the mountain slope and was separated from the village by a strip of cultivated fields. Although we felt affronted at having been refused hospitality we found consolation in the silence of the place. Jābir was half a mile away and even the most inquisitive of its inhabitants retired to their houses when darkness fell. A belt of ithl trees along the wadi bank would give us protection from the curious and shade from the sun during the daytime. The breeze stirred the ithls sighing softly as we lay down on our mattresses and looked up at the vertical wall of rock that drew the sharp, black line of its crest across the starry sky. A day full of tension and trouble had come to an end. What we deplored most was the harm done to the unity of our team. Muhsin and his comrades were suffering from the reaction that followed the fury of all the reproaches that had been screamed into their faces. Once with their Captain they had been turned back from the Talh pass. We were over the pass but had run up against another barrier. They had lost confidence in the ultimate success of our endeavours while we had not. The escort formed one silent solitary group and we four made up a group of our own. That night each was estranged from the other.

The whole day from the Sha'b Na'mān to the village of Jābir had been one long series of tensions and disappointments. As we sat in the dust under the big 'ilb we realised that it was Sunday, Palm Sunday, and feeling miserable and dejected our thoughts wandered far away. Then the truth of the words of an old traveller in Arabia struck me: "After all an explorer is always travelling homewards."

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THE bed of the wadi opposite Jābir was to be our camping-place for two days and three nights. Here plans were made and came to nought, letters were written and negotiations carried on. Gradually we began to grasp something of the political situation around us and to get some inkling of the geography of the territory that separated us from Nisāb.

The Sheikh of Jābir was not an ordinary tribal chieftain whose authority rests on family tradition, on wealth or the prestige of personal prowess. He proved to be one of those chieftains whom one encounters occasionally in these regions and whose authority has a religious origin. He was addressed as "Mansab" (a man of rank, a dignitary) and he derived his position from his descent from men who bore some special relations to the Prophet in a way that was not clear to me. It was not descent from the Prophet himself; that gives a right to the title of Seiyid, which is borne by many, especially in the Hadhramaut, where they enjoy a highly-privileged position in society. Such descent confers upon them political rights which may lead to their being chosen as leaders in a political, non-religious sphere. The Mansab we met here was not a Seiyid. Probably his ancestors were religious leaders, preachers, perhaps, who infused new life into a degenerate observance of Islam; they may even have been missionaries descended from those who originally introduced the religion of the Prophet into this country. In common with the Sāda, the Manāsib (plural of Mansab) do not carry arms and so should take no part in warfare; they are therefore chosen as negotiators and, as intermediaries, enjoy a kind of immunity. This is the theory that should hold in a Moslem country. The practice often falls short of this and therefore the Mansab of Jābir preferred to live in an easily defendable stronghold. Still, they stand apart, these men raised by religion above the common run of mankind, and are different from the ordinary temporal chieftains who are raiders and men of war.

The Mansab of Jābir sought to get into touch with us on the very first day of our arrival while we were patiently waiting under the 'ilb and sent out his son to reconnoitre. When he himself eventually arrived a long

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conversation started which, naturally, began with inquiries about our reasons for being in their country. We answered that we were on our way to the Hadhramaut where there were many Dutch subjects, friends of ours, who had made their fortunes in the Netherlands East Indies and whom we were going to visit. He seemed incredulous, partly, no doubt, because he knew little or nothing about the Hadhramaut. We explained in detail the relation between the Netherlands East Indies and the Hadhramaut and after that the story did not appear to be quite so fantastic. In the course of our talk it transpired that the Mansab himself had travelled: he had, for instance, twice performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. So once more the blessed topic of the Holy Land was broached. The bystanders pricked up their ears perceiving that the experiences of their chieftain corroborated what we told them about the Holy Land as it was under the old régime and as it is now under the Wahhābi King Ibn Sa'ūd. It was remarkable how quickly followed the awkward request that we should recite the confession of faith. People who were so familiar with the Holy Land must surely, in spite of their outlandish appearance, be fellow Moslems! I answered with a quotation from the Qurān which acknowledges that it is right for Jews and Christians to abide by their own religion. So our first conversation ended on a very satisfactory note and the Mansab promised to help but put the sum for which he thought we might purchase free passage at a mere 1,000 Maria Theresa dollars.

Then came the moment when the unpacking of our baggage had progressed far enough for us to fulfil our promise of medical assistance. One of our camel-drivers had, on the road, already asked for treatment for his wife. His home was in Jābir and his wife had been suffering for a long time from a strange illness. Our answer that we did not treat patients without being allowed to see them failed to discourage him. With heavy hearts we trudged through the darkness to the village with our medicine chest carried behind us. We waited before the door of the house until he invited us to enter a dark hall. His wife came down the stairs; she was unveiled like all the women here. She looked at us unabashed, listening attentively while her husband related the history of her case and interrupting now and then with a correction. She had had nine children in quick succession: and only one survived. Then, suddenly, she had had no children for six or seven years. She was about five months gone with child and had remained so up to now. Throughout that time the foetus could be felt. There was indeed a distinct swelling but the woman did not seem to be in

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pain. She had beautiful teeth and a regular pulse but somewhat swollen arms and legs. What could we laymen do? Little beyond making a few cheering remarks and reminding her that Allah is the Healer. They had, of course, to have medicine, and here our handsome stock of Bayer's patent medicines stood us in good stead and we selected a tonic for her. Other women in the meantime had gathered round, all behaving without any of the shyness and timidity usual in those parts of Arabia where Islām is more zealously practised. The younger ones had yellow painted faces and all wore the loose, blue dress with square-cut open neck which often exposed part of the bare shoulder. Their many necklaces—each wore at least ten—were mostly of silver but some of red coral or seeds. Above their ankles they had solid silver bangles four inches in breadth.

In the village mosque we called on our two Yemeni fellow-travellers. The elder had, under the hardened skin of his heel, an enormous blister filled with fluid, which was causing him severe pain. What an effort it must have cost the old man, limping and leaning on his staff, to climb the Talh pass behind the caravan. Of course, it had not then been so serious and whenever the going permitted he had been allowed to ride one of the camels. But now it looked very bad. He was still quite a long way from Tarim in the Hadhramaut where his son was studying theology. Something had to be done. We tried lancing the blister with a penknife but the skin was tough and thick and the patient moaned in pain. His faithful Yemeni comrade then performed the operation, encouraged by us, and we did not leave them until a jet of fluid spurted out of the blister. This must have worked wonders for some days later the two set off and walked without difficulty to Nisāb where our ways were later to converge again.

The nights were very cool. We were at a height of about 4,800 feet. Our camp touched the well-nigh perpendicular southern wall of the wadi along which a cool wind blew. In the mornings we lay luxuriously basking in the sun, enjoying the music of the groaning and whining wooden pulleys over which the well-ropes ran up and down raising water to irrigate the village wheat fields. We were wakened at sunrise by the singing of the *sāqis* as they urged on their animals at the work of raising the water-skins, and this music of Happy Arabia led us gradually to appreciate the songs of the soldiers and camel-drivers.

In our wadi we had the company of grey-brown doves while numerous black birds perched in little holes in the cliff. High above us vultures circled slowly on the watch for refuse. When the sun became too hot we

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would move to the ithl trees and spread blankets over their drooping branches to make a little shade where we could pass the day. The plants in our presses received a thorough drying here. Experience had taught us that this was necessary in order to preserve the succulent and other dry-country plants which contain a high proportion of liquid, from mould and decay.

As fresh reports came in new plans were conceived and tried out. But things were not yet going well. We might traverse the territory of the Mansab of Jābir and that of his neighbour who was also said to be a Mansab, but that was only a distance of about eight miles. After that came the Rabizī country, where the Hil Shams (Hil being probably a corruption of Ahl, that is, people) under the leadership of their Sheikh, 'Ali bin Sālih, were at war and had therefore closed the road to all traffic and certainly to foreigners from Aden, the seat of the Hukūma, which forbids them to take the law into their own hands in this old-fashioned way.

Unfortunately we did not succeed in making personal contact with this Hil Shams Sheikh. Everything continued to be done by means of letters and intermediaries. In this way we wasted much time without making any progress. We contemplated the possibility of making a detour or even descending the Talh pass again. Once back at the foot of the Talh we should have to try to trek along the southern slope of the mountain range to Yeshbum. At first we were told that we would have to march four days from the foot of the Talh pass to Yeshbum. Now, however, it appeared that the journey would take seven days while there, too, several tribes of uncertain temper would have to be passed. News of our failure before the Rabizī country would spread like wild-fire among the tribes and there was a great danger that others would be emboldened to stop us. To retreat here would probably mean a total defeat. So we had to stake everything on making a detour immediately through the mountains, and making it quickly before the tribes heard about us. The escort viewed this plan with much misgiving: they thought it could not be done with laden camels. Over and above that we should not, even then, avoid crossing a strip of the Hil Shams country. Muhsin therefore did his utmost to force a passage. He had, as it turned out, still two more cards to play. The first was Khabbāsh, the Mansab of a neighbouring tribe living in Al Medīna, who was held in high esteem for his wisdom. Someone was sent to fetch him. A few hours later Khabbāsh rode up on a donkey followed by some servants. The latter lifted the deformed Mansab from his mount and set him on the ground.

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The upper part of his body was normal, but his legs were thin, short and incapable of carrying him. He walked by grasping his legs in his muscular hands and hitching them forward.

At the introduction Khabbāsh's earnest, intelligent eyes appealed to us to look beyond his deformity and to seek in them the real man with his power of understanding and his purity of soul. Khabbāsh inspired confidence; he saw our distress, listened patiently and gave shrewd advice. When the Mansab of Jābir returned home he would go with him to see the warring chieftain and try his influence upon him. "You will have to pay," he said. "He will ask at least 1,000 Maria Theresa dollars." We conferred with Muhsin and agreed to go up to 200 dollars. Khabbāsh did not guarantee anything or raise expectations. But still he gave us some hope, this man who, through the suffering of his crippled body, had acquired a kindliness and deep knowledge of humanity which we recognized gratefully in these surroundings. When the Mansab of Jābir appeared Khabbāsh shuffled to his donkey, was hoisted on it by his men, and together they set off for a last conference.

Muhsin, who knew that he would have to answer to his Captain for any failure or forced withdrawal, thought he saw one more way out. He proposed that we should try one last resource namely, a *hila*, a ruse.

"Are you willing to tell a lie in the matter?" he asked uncertainly.

"Let us hear what it is first," we countered.

It turned out to be the idea of the Mansab of Jābir which had been seconded most warmly by his two clansmen in our escort. The *hila* is a method much used and not at all despised by the beduin here. The proposal was that we should pass ourselves off as British officials, "great men" of the Hukūma in Aden. That would not be very difficult because no other kind of European was known here. But we were late with our bluff. We should have to give the Sheikh of the Hil Shams a written declaration in the name of the Hukūma that the Sheikh and his men would not be punished for their war against the 'Awāliq and their closing of the road. Muhsin and the soldier Sālim who had been specially given to us for this part of the trip held this to be our last hope. Their clean-cut, attractive faces were turned towards us full of expectation: "Ya Sab (the Indian way of pronouncing Sāhib), mā-ih-tariq thāni illa al hila" (Sir, there is no way other than the ruse). We answered that we were prepared to use guile, provided we could do it in such a way that afterwards we should incur no blame.

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"Oh no, there is no danger of that. If it succeeds the outwitted beduin will say he has taken us in and got away with it."

"And the Hukūma in Aden?"

"That is not our business, they can take care of themselves."

"We cannot bind the Hukūma. The word of the British must be their bond among all beduin here. Even Kurnel Lake and Captain Hamilton, who are your fathers, cannot bind the Hukūma without special authority. We are ready to bind ourselves and advise the Hukūma not to punish them if they let us pass."

That, however, was not thought good enough. Nevertheless they would try if only we would write a letter in English and allow Muhsin to make a free translation of it in Arabic. In this letter we particularly urged that the Sheikh of the Hil Shams should come during the night, unseen by anyone, to our camp so that we could talk together. Fear of the avenging British aeroplane and its bombs was evidently very much present in the minds of these people.

It was a depressing night of deferred hopes. The sky became overcast; it began to drizzle and later on to rain in earnest. In the darkness we were obliged to shift from the sandy bed of the wadi across to the edge of the ithl trees. Over the lower branches we now stretched strips of mackintosh used for packing the baggage and under that scanty shelter we huddled together. Luckily it was not a really serious rainstorm this time: that was in store for us after Nisāb.

That night neither our Manāsib nor the warrior Sheikh arrived. Next morning, hours passed before we learned of the definite break-down of the negotiations. The Manāsib had played all their cards but the leader of the Hil Shams could be moved neither by offering him money nor by threatening him with the Hukūma. He insisted on his right as a free man to pursue his war with the 'Awāliq and wreak his just revenge and until that was done he would forbid all passage through his country. No, not even if we, or the Hukūma itself, were to pay 1,000 Maria Theresa dollars should we be allowed to pass through.

It was good to know this definitely so that we could give up making fruitless efforts. The Manāsib expressed the opinion that we could make a circuit of the forbidden territory through the mountains and promised every assistance with guides and siyāras. As a matter of fact most of these were already at hand in Jābir, as if they, like the vultures, had scented their prey from afar and had already come along to see if there were any pickings.

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We had still, however, to persuade our escort. The two men who had been specially given to us for these notoriously difficult territories were in favour of this plan. They knew these infernal mountains and did not shrink from them. Muhsin had no faith in our being able to get through. That was why he tried so hard up to the very last to force a way by the ordinary route. But his disappointment at the failure of his efforts and the arguments used on him by his two soldiers finally persuaded him. He was followed reluctantly by the others who also felt no enthusiasm for returning over the Talh pass.

The making of new plans and the immediate preparations put everyone into a better mood. Before evening the necessary siyāras were found: the son of the Mansab of Jābir was to be our guide for the first day. In addition to him we needed for that first part eight siyāras at a cost of forty-five Maria Theresa dollars. Then the Manāsib Muhammad of Jābir and Khabbāsh from Al Medīna had to have a present for the special help they had given. After this had been settled we began packing and dividing up the baggage with a light heart. For three days we had felt that we were trapped, now we all worked with a will to break loose and win a way over the forbidding rocks.

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VERY early next morning everybody was busy in the light of the full moon getting away from the Wadi Hatib. This wadi stretches as far as Nisāb and in three days' time we hoped to see it again at a point lower down. We travelled back for half an hour westward up Wadi Hatib and then started to climb the northern mountain wall. To us this climb from 4,800 feet to about 6,000 feet was an enjoyable exercise but for the camels it soon became a severe strain. A stiff breeze blew over the mountain plateau from which we gazed upon the absorbing panorama of the country we had travelled over after the Talli pass and the endless mountain ranges that yet lay before us. The track now crossed an undulating plateau covered with boulders where the camels found the going easier. In one wide, shallow basin there lay an extensive *tūn* (a mud-flat formed by the drainage of rain water) which, in time of sufficient rainfall, was probably cultivated. No sign of terracing was to be seen. The soldiers pointed out the remains of a wall built of boulders and forming an oval enclosure round the whole mud-flat. They maintained that it was a relic of pre-Islamic times and hence a vestige of Himyaritic civilization. They used this word Himyar and said that the Himyarites were not Arabs meaning that they were not Moslems. In the middle of the mud-flat stood a number of upright rectangular blocks of stone which were also, perhaps, relics of olden days. We were here in a region over which the Himyaritic civilization had once extended. All the Arabs of these parts who had been outside their own immediate neighbourhood knew of old inscriptions and drawings on rock-walls and of the remains of buildings that they ascribed to the old pagan people.

Muhsin observed that a tribe living in the vicinity was called "Himyar" and thought, perhaps rightly, that this indicated descent from the people of that ancient civilization.

We travelled on. The plateau was soon crossed and we began a series of climbs and descents that lasted all that day. Since we were following

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a little-used by-way the scrambling up and down was even more difficult and dangerous for the camels than it had been on the highway that ascends the Talh pass. When going down the worst places we saw the camel-drivers grasp their animals' tails and pull back on them with all their might to give the camels confidence to tackle the steep slope. The mountain landscape here was most imposing and varied but it was a land bare of vegetation, seemingly lifeless. We crossed extensive beds of lava consisting of hard and sharp black stones. Occasionally the lines of a flow of lava could be distinctly traced and that identification made it possible for us to see where the craters had been. Through deep wadis and over high, rocky saddles we struggled on. The camels had to make detours in places where we could manage to climb up the face of the rocks and, gaining the ridge, rest and cool off in the dry wind. No halt was made that day. The cook had been busy by four o'clock that morning baking bread for everyone as a ration for the road. We ate wheaten cakes by the roadside, washed them down with a few gulps of water from the bags and then pushed on again at once. No urging was needed: all were alike convinced that only the utmost exertion on the part of everyone could carry us through.

The caravan struggled on. In this land apparently void of human life the rarely trodden path led among rocks over whose crests a dry wind blew while the hollows, that we had to descend into and sometimes follow for a short while, were stifling tunnels. Gladly we turned away from their suffocating heat to climb the heights again and pause a while in the breeze. The camel-drivers and their beasts were performing a feat that would be talked about later round the camp-fires between Talh and Nisāb. From the highest mountain-tops could be seen far in the distance a broad sandy wadi behind which stretched the plain of Al Hādhina. Somewhere on the sand between it and us lay Nisāb.

We hoped to camp at the end of this first day at the foot of the Jebel al-'Urr which, with its estimated height of 7,000 feet, stands up a little above the surrounding mountain ranges. In the afternoon we saw a black ridge surmounted by the ruins of a Himyaritic fort which gave the whole mountain range its name of Al Masna'a (the building). We were told that at the foot of the mountain was a well, now fallen in, also of Himyaritic construction. Fort and well both lay too far away for us to visit them, for in this uncertain territory it was advisable to keep together and push on. Towards evening the son of the Mansab of Jābir and his men took leave of

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us. Among them they pocketed a handsome sum in wages but they had served us well.

We reached the camping-place by sunset. The wadi in which we made the last stage of the day's journey was broader here and, for the first time, had a sand and gravel floor. For eleven hours without pause the camels had travelled through the hardest country we had ever seen crossed by laden camels. In the last hour of daylight some vegetation could be seen in the wadi; close to the camp grew the low palm known as nashr, which the beduin tap to make an intoxicating liquor. The quantity obtained can hardly be very great but all in the caravan knew the drink and believed that as it was not wine it could not be unlawful for a Moslem to get drunk on it.

After the great heat of the day it would be cold at night so three big fires were lighted. The strong wind which rose half-way through the night made further sleep impossible for some of our people. Moreover the baking of bread had to begin very early for another day of forced marching lay ahead of us. Then, too, the harsh fronds of the dwarf nashr palm made such a rustling in the wind that we simply gave up trying to sleep. Soon after sunrise the caravan was ready to start. We expected that the march would not be so hard as on the previous day but we had reckoned without the beduin who were lying in wait for us. While it was yet morning we were approached by advance guards who forbade our further progress through the wadi. There followed heated discussions with our siyāras and soldiers. The upshot was that we refused to pay any more toll money. But this meant leaving the wadi which had just become good going. 'Awadh, our soldier from the Hil 'Abūd tribe, who belonged to this district, now undertook to lead us and went ahead of the whole party. As a youngster he had roamed about here with his goats. We scrambled up the steep face of the rocks and began the second wearisome detour in this stage of our journey. The camels could not follow here, and so, guided by another man who knew this country well, they went still farther round and thus we far out-distanced them. Full of pride 'Awadh asked what we thought of his country. Our answer that it was the devil's own country and that its people must be able to live on stones and sand caused general hilarity. "Bilād ash-Shaitān" became the name by which this part of the country we travelled through was known ever afterwards on our journey. We had to scale enormous cliffs only to descend again painfully and laboriously on the other side. Then, for a short time, the way would

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lead over rounded boulders in a wadi bed only to begin climbing afresh. On the mountain ridges we repeatedly approached the 6,000 foot line and there we found the breeze cool and refreshing. The views continued to be majestic and fantastic, but the eye was wearied by the barrenness of the landscape and by the sombre tones of the rocks many of which were of a shining black.

The lagging of the camels gave us an opportunity to rest whenever we reached a place where there was shade. It is impossible to understand what a beduin tribe can live on in such an arid land. Such secrets of the wastes and deserts of Arabia will be unveiled only by a man who has the will and power of endurance to live with a tribe throughout a whole year. Still, goats, a few sheep, and camels seem to find some sustenance here. There are no wells in this country and the people rely for existence on the water that collects in the deep hollows of the rocks. From such a place our men filled a leathern bag for us and one after the other we drank long and greedily from the unrolled mouth of the bag—that is, from the neck of the former tenant of the skin. By pressing with the hand on the back of the skin the water is made to rise to the desired height for drinking. The water always tastes a little of the tanning and of goat but the drinker only notices this when, having slaked his thirst, he savours the aftertaste.

We approached the semi-permanent dwelling place of Sheikh Sālih, our guide for this day. The report of our arrival travelled faster than we did and thus we were met, in the place where we had halted for a short rest, by two little boys, one of whom turned out to be the young son of Sheikh Sālih. They were allowed to come closer and kiss our hands, after which the lean Ahmad, frankly staring at us, sat down close to his father. The latter kissed him on the forehead. Ahmad's eyes were full of enquiry. His world had so far consisted of rocks, the small cattle he herded and the tribe. One of the soldiers gave him a lump of sugar which he kept in his hand for a long time before nibbling it. These children of the wilderness were not greedy and showed much reserve in eating anything we offered them. They knew of little variety in their diet and what we gave them aroused their suspicions and was only half appreciated.

By showing him a watch we lured Ahmad closer. He listened and could not suppress an exclamation of wonder. More amazing still was when one of us put sun-glasses on his nose. Ahmad was bright and apparently unprejudiced. He asked questions and listened attentively while we told

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him of other wonders in the world from which we came. His father himself had brought these foreigners with him and was being kind to them, why then should he not follow so trustworthy an example? Young Ahmad came along with us, held our hands, asked questions and listened and in the end enquired whether he might not follow us. We had not meant to go so far. Would not Ahmad be happier living here than wandering through the world outside his own familiar rocks?

Round a bend of the wadi we came a little unexpectedly upon Sheikh Sālih's camp. In order not to alarm the women and children, as well as many of the men, we were asked not to go near the huts and tents or to take photographs. A procession of dark men carrying rifles came out of a great central tent. Their greeting was not accompanied by the firing of rifles—that would have cost these poor people too much, but they received us with ceremony. In the wadi, at the edge of the settlement, long strips of goat-hair cloth had been spread out on the gravel in the shade of some acacias. Here we all sat in a ring and were regaled with the fruit of this land, the dōm, a berry about as big as a good-sized pea, consisting of a hard kernel covered with a thin skin, bitter-sweet to the taste. It is the fruit of the very poor and one can nibble them by the handful until the jaws ache, with the sole satisfaction of having swallowed a lot of vitamins.

Ahmad and his comrades made themselves very useful. As we were parched with thirst clear water was offered in a large wooden bowl. Carefully and solemnly the bowl passed from mouth to mouth and no word was spoken while, with pursed lips, each man in turn sucked up the water from the bowl without touching the vessel with his lips. This was something of a breach of beduin custom for the beduin usually bear with their thirst until the ceremony of preparing and handing round coffee is performed. Coffee quenches the thirst better than water and so avoids the swallowing of excessive quantities of liquid.

We stole covert glances at the settlement which consisted, for the most part, of primitive huts either built against overhanging rocks so that only front walls were necessary or else standing clear and covered with the woven fronds of the nashr palm.

In the middle of the settlement was a real beduin tent, low and wide-stretched and made of the familiar coarsely-woven black goat-hair. This seemed to be the men's meeting place.

The aged father of Sheikh Sālih was at the head of the men who, armed with the traditional spear, came out to greet us. He sat in the place of

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honour and we next to him. He commanded and his son served. His hookah was brought and, after he had taken a few deep pulls, passed on and allowed to go round the whole circle of men. Meanwhile coffee had been made. It was qishr coffee, prepared from the dried husk of the coffee bean. Two coffee-pots with a plug of plant-fibre in the neck to keep back the boiled husks and the ginger root and two woven baskets filled with little earthenware cups were produced. Usually there are far fewer cups than guests so that they have to be passed round. In this country of broils and battles coffee-drinking is the peace ceremony of the beduin meeting. That form of hospitality is ever refreshing and until the camels caught up with us we sat there partaking of their open-handed generosity and enjoying the pleasure of being among those unsophisticated people who lived in the utmost simplicity in a healthy but exacting land.

The camels were very tired but in order to carry out our plan of march we had to keep on for a few hours more. We were approaching more thickly inhabited regions and beduin of related tribes came running up and began to squabble loudly with our siyāras over their right to squeeze money out of us, or alternatively to share in the wages paid to them. We were to pay eighty Maria Theresa dollars for this day's travelling and had no intention of exceeding that sum. The dispute continued but we travelled on. As the path was narrow the beduin, thirsty for spoil, kept up with us by running along the cliff and over the crests of the rocks on either side, threatening and haggling as they went. It was a fantastic spectacle to see these men, armed with rifles, nimble as mountain goats, scurrying over the steep rocks and yet having breath enough left to maintain a torrent of resounding invective. We tried to push ahead, away from the noise, leaving our twenty-one guides to defend the integrity of their wages by themselves.

As evening fell we halted in Sha'b al Furū' (locally pronounced am Furū') at a height of about 4,000 feet. The numbers of the caravan had become so swollen by the numerous siyāras that five campfires had to be lit to get the better of the cold night wind. Men and animals were tired out and everyone enjoyed a good night's rest in a silence not experienced during the day. Later than usual, that is to say at five o'clock in the morning, preparations for the third day's march were begun. The caravan-men themselves urged us on, for this day should see the much-desired end of their journey. One more complicated mountain climb and then the caravan descended into the Wadi Mahaliyah which ought finally to open into the broad

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loam-edged Wadi ed-Dhura leading to the gradually widening sands wherein should lie Nisāb. Everyone was thankful when the scene changed, when the slopes became gentler and the flat, broad wadi-bottom with trees, and here and there a field, came in sight. We soon noticed that the cool wind of the rocky heights had also been left behind and that we were once more travelling in Arabian desert heat. The strewn rocks that rang like metal as we stumbled over them gave way to sand and loess.

The camels now trod soundlessly, setting their padded feet upon a surface for which they were intended. The aching feet of the men felt as if they went on rich carpets where they might safely walk without watching every step. No sound was to be heard other than the rasping and creaking of the cords round the baggage. At first there were thorny acacias in the wadi. Then came the harmal which later was to become our daily companion. It is a poisonous low plant rejected even by camel and donkey. Hermann owes his Arabic nickname of Harmal to the similarity in sound between the two words. It was only because he was so well-liked and because everyone knew on what close terms he lived with the men that they gave him so inappropriate a name, which was seldom uttered in the caravan without raising a shout of joyful laughter. After the harmal we soon saw the familiar rāk, a bush with edible dark-violet berries. The Arab makes his tooth-brush from the roots of this bush by cutting a short stick and fraying out the end with his teeth. The rāk is greedily eaten by camels even although they know that it will give them diarrhoea. If a caravan travels for a long time through country where rāk grows the camels' tails, swinging incessantly, spatter baggage, riders and those walking alongside with a shower of green excrement and the smell of what once was rāk never afterwards leaves the caravan. Those who drink the milk of a camel that has fed on rāk themselves experience the violently purgative effect of the plant.

Wadi ed-Dhura has a wide, sandy floor and, along the foot of the hills, thick terraces of loess whose edges, fronting on the wadi, have been cut perpendicular by the seil. Where the terraces are wide enough they are cultivated, for in addition to being watered by the seil they are irrigated from wells. Women and children were busy watering the herds from these wells as we passed. Great 'ilb trees grew on the terraces and in their shade we saw herds of goats waiting for the dōm fruits and the leaves and twigs which the girls were beating down with long sticks. Under the first 'ilbs we gathered fresh dōm fruits, filling our pockets until we had enough

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to chew as we went along. At one of the wells we halted to drink our fill for it was very hot.

On mountain ridges in the distance the first watch-towers appeared indicating that we were reaching the neighbourhood of the seat of the Dōla (the Government) for the Sultan of Nisāb or Ansāb does not live in the town of Nisāb but six miles to the south. The wadi at this point became very broad and was floored with hills of sand and loam. The Sultan's castle was at an-Nuqūb, hard by the mountains, because presumably the place was deemed more favourable strategically than Nisāb, and on the surrounding mountain spurs the Sultan could build his watch-towers and forts. The first big fort, situated high above us, proved to be well manned. As we passed the soldiers looked straight down upon us from over the parapet of the roof. The Sultan lived in the plain, in the hamlet of an-Nuqūb, where the houses were built of stone and plastered with mud mixed with chopped straw. These houses were high with small, square window-openings framed with only a very narrow band of whitewash as the limestone had to be brought from far away. Low walls of a simple open-work pattern encircled the flat roofs with tall upright stones set at the corners.

The reception accorded us in front of the Sultan's group of dwellings was very reserved and disappointing, tired and thirsty as we were and longing for friendliness. But we told each other that it was understandable that, faced with such an unexpected visit, the Sultan was not going to commit himself. After some waiting we were admitted into the first tower-like castle where with all the soldiers and caravan men we had to crowd into one dark apartment. Here we were entertained by the Sultan's soldiers. Three brothers of the Sultan came and showed themselves one after the other and then disappeared with Muhsin who had to hand over his Captain's letter to the Sultan. The expected invitation to follow them into a separate room did not materialize although some pots of qishr coffee were brought and a great bowl of water was handed round from mouth to mouth. How good it tasted!

For hours we sat thus together in our square, overcrowded apartment whose small window-holes admitted little fresh air, less light and no coolness. We sat on the ground with our backs against the wall which was sticky from the greasy, indigo backs of the soldiers who had leaned there before us. Our thoughts wandered towards the expected meal of roasted and boiled meat and bowls of soup which they must be cooking for us. Our fancies

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had become a little childish after three such days! It was a slight disappointment when only a simple *beduin* meal appeared. First they brought in two mats on which the food was to be set and around these we sat in two groups both equally hungry. Then each man was given a round of piping-hot brown bread and when a wooden bowl of *samn* was placed in the middle of each group we invoked the name of Allah and heartily fell to. Dipping pieces of bread into the rank, clarified butter our whole company ate until courage and cheerfulness returned once more to weary bodies. After the meal we were allowed to go up to the flat roof to wash our hands and take a few photographs. A black slave, however, went with us and forbade us to turn our lenses, were it ever so little, in the direction of the other houses.

The view from the roof was typical of the transition from mountain to sandy desert and plain. The mountains in the direction of Nisāb receded more and more towards the edges of the ever-widening wadi. Brown, like the loam on which they stood, were the houses of the little villages in the distance. Nisāb could be discerned only dimly on the horizon, not because it was far but because, after midday, whirling winds raised the sand in tall columns of dust-devils which heralded the coming of a sand-storm. On the mountain spurs stood a few towers of bold and harmonious proportions whose strong constructional lines indicated that we were approaching a country of architects. The Hadhramaut is their homeland and the wadis falling in that direction show more and more of this art, the one treasure salvaged from the wreck of an ancient civilization.

As we were given only the vaguest of invitations to stay the night we decided to leave in order to reach Nisāb just before dark. At our leave-taking one of the brothers told us that the Sultan was a little unwell and therefore could not receive us. He himself would come in the morning and call on us in Nisāb to talk over the arrangements for the next part of our journey. We might find lodging, he told us, in the house of Seiyid Āl Jufri who was used to putting up foreigners. There the Sultan's brother would come and talk about the camels which, apparently, he would like to hire to us. Muhsin made no comment but Captain Hamilton had instructed him to apply for camels to the Āl Hammām tribe who had pitched their tents on the other side of Nisāb.

After taking our leave—a ceremony during which the male inhabitants of an-Nuqūb crowded inquisitively round the caravan—we pushed on into the wide, sandy plain. In the hazy distance we could just discern

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Nisāb. Tall columns of whirling sand moved over the plain. The distance to the town, seen as an indistinct whitish blur, was not great and we thought we could do without guides, being only too glad to be by ourselves after sitting packed together for hours in that stuffy room. So we set straight course for Nisāb leaving the caravan to follow. But the distance was deceptive; the sand was soft and made the going difficult. By the time we were approaching the town the sand-laden wind had gathered strength and the light was wan under the lowering sky. Too tired for talking we trudged on in silence. On arrival at the burial-ground that lies before the little town we waited for the stragglers and sat down to empty our shoes of their encumbering load of sand. It was there that the youth of the town became aware that something unusual was happening: far in the distance they had seen a caravan and in front of it four strange-looking people with a few soldiers. Now with loud shrieks they came running out to meet us, the boldest and most impudent in front. With a clamorous crowd of boys jostling round us we got up and set off again but had to stop every now and again to check the mounting offensiveness of their attitude. Some then retired and kept their distance for a bit while others ran ahead to rouse the town.

Enveloped in a cloud of dust the lads brought us in procession to where, at the edge of the town, a crowd of grown-ups had assembled to see us coming nearer. The arrival of four tired, dirty, limping strangers who knew not where to turn for shelter must have been an edifying spectacle.

The older people became infected with the impudence of the youngsters. They crowded close on our heels and some gave vent to abusive shouts. Muhsin turned round and asked them to behave decently. They stopped for a moment and fell silent. But scarcely had we begun to walk on again when they began to laugh and jeer and even throw clods of earth. Our soldiers lunged in simulated anger at our persecutors snatching up stones to intimidate them, but to little avail. We walked as quickly as the narrowing streets, the thick dust-clouds and the increasing crush would allow. The situation was beginning to look ugly when there worked his way to us through the menacing crowd a little man who caught the eye because he alone among all those people was dressed in clean white. Without a word he took one of us by the hand and made us a sign to follow him with all speed. He hurried through one or two narrow streets to the back of a house where he opened a door and hustled us into a dark passage. The

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escort followed; the door swung to; he himself shot the heavy wooden bolt and we stood in darkness and in wondrous quiet.

Seiyid 'Abdallah bin Muhammad Āl Jufri, our unforgettable host of Nisāb, had in this unconventional way brought home his guests. Outside howled the crowd cheated out of their fun. Some lumps of dry mud were aimed at his house. The Seiyid laughed reassuringly: "In my house you are safe!" he said. On his hospitable roof and under the shield of his spiritual authority ended our successful detour of the territory where the Rabizis were carrying on their war and forbidding passage to all travellers.

CHAPTER 8

The Ancient Town of Nisāb

WE had to make a stay of some days in Nisāb in order to get together a new caravan for the next part of the journey which would lie through sandy desert. Not only had we to select strong camels which we hoped we should be able to retain until the Hadhramaut, our goal, was reached but also we had to carry on long negotiations so as to arrive at a reasonable price for their hire and to make sure that the conditions of hire would not be affected by unforeseen events of the road. Provisions, too, had to be collected.

Nisāb, a little town dating from the days of remote antiquity when Arabia played an important part in world commerce and traffic, well repaid a short delay and could indeed have claimed much more of our time. The trade route along which the costly products of China and India came to the highly civilized countries of the Mediterranean probably passed through Nisāb. Freya Stark, whom von Wissmann's map had led into and about the Hadhramaut and who did some considerable exploration there, has recorded her travels in several books which will have a lasting value, above all for their literary merit. She searched for the traces of this "Incense-Road" and has described her findings in articles in reviews¹ and in her books.² In particular she investigated the southern coast where the transport by sea of merchandise ended and the caravan traffic began. It was from this coast that the long caravans must have started their journey northwards taking, among others, the road through Nisāb.³

To our host these were not unfamiliar speculations. Like most Arabs he took particular interest in history and geography and he knew, too, the narratives of the old Arab geographers partly through his own reading and partly through oral tradition. We could not have lighted on a more

¹ The Geographical Journal, Vol. xciii, London, Jan., 1939. *An Exploration in the Hadhramaut and Journey to the Coast.*

² *A Winter in Arabia* and *The Southern Gates of Arabia.* John Murray, London.

³ See my article in *Nederlandsch-Indische Geographische Mededeelingen*, Vol. 1, No. 3. May, 1941. *De Exploratie van Zuid-Arabië.*

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enthusiastic or more able guide through old Nisāb than our Seiyid. Hermann and Wasi went out the very first day under his leadership to look for Himyaritic inscriptions on the rocky walls that border the wadi to the north.

They also wanted to go to the mountains in order to get a view over the surrounding country and to fix the position of Nisāb and its environs definitely on their map. They had time enough however to look for inscriptions and to copy such as they found. The value of these messages of the ancients is not well understood by present-day Arabs. They can no longer decipher the inscriptions themselves and suspect (often not unjustifiably) that they have some connexion with local pre-Islamic religion which was detestable heathenry.

The Seiyid, however, soon acquired the taste: he made enquiries right and left of the beduin and ferreted out inscriptions himself with a sound instinct but he had expected us to be more interested in the evidences of the ancient prosperity and greatness of the town of Nisāb than in these—for all of us—unintelligible fragments of Himyaritic information.

I stayed at home with Muhsin the first day to settle money matters and to forage in preparation for the coming ten days' journey. Two brothers of the Sultan from an-Nuqūb had to be received and heard. They tried to find out why we had not come by air as the British always did and why we had undergone all the fatigue of travelling overland. Between an-Nuqūb and Nisāb lies the central British aerodrome for these territories. It was difficult to make these people understand that there are other white men besides the British and that often these others cannot travel in such array as officials do. These men of authority showed some anxiety to learn how we had got on with the tribes we had passed through. It could not have been very agreeable for the Sultan to meet strangers who had seen so plainly his shortcomings in the exercise of authority. His indisposition during our visit might well have had some connexion with his embarrassment and the report his brothers took back from us was scarcely calculated to reassure him.

On top of this they were to be disappointed: we had no intention of hiring camels from the Sultan. They did not discover that we had been warned in Aden against hiring camels from the Sultan and that the Sheikh of the Hammām had been recommended to us as the most reliable camel-broker. They offered, however, in the name of the Sultan, to give any other assistance we might require. Later on it transpired that in return

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for this amiable final offer the Sultan's brothers expected to receive a small present of money. Muhsin came, charged by them, to inform me of this. He felt ashamed of their behaviour and made the excuse that British officials themselves had introduced this demoralizing method of making things easy although now, having seen the results, they would gladly put an end to it.

The Seiyid was a much-travelled man; he had been to Jidda and even claimed to have seen me there in "Beit Hollanda" (the Dutch House). He advised us to leave the following afternoon and go no further that day than the camp of the Hammām tribe. He recommended that we should go on from there to 'Ayād, the farthest British outpost where, a short time before, Captain Hamilton had stationed ten men with wireless equipment. At 'Ayād, before penetrating the as yet unexplored Wadi Jirdān, we might renew the attempt to inform Aden of our progress which we had made without success near Lodar. Seiyid Āl Jufri predicted that we should find more Himyaritic remains near the Wadi Jirdān. Our further plans thus began to assume a definite shape.

Between An Nuqūb and Nisāb we saw horses again for the first time since leaving Lodar. They were fine, strong animals and had probably been imported from the Yemen. The price proved to be very high. For a good horse they asked from 500 to 1,000 Maria Theresa dollars. The amount I had expected—about 100 dollars—was the cost of a good donkey or pack-camel.

It was here, too, that for the first time since we had left the coastal plain we saw some tall, fully-grown date-palms. Why they were so few was explained to us later by the Seiyid as we scoured the environs of Nisāb with him in search of relics of the Himyaritic civilization. Walking through Nisāb we even discovered a little school where, early in the morning, the children were busy droning their recitation of the Qurān. The town boasts of six mosques and on its outer edge, near the burial ground, there are some qubbās commemorating the pious forefathers of the place.

On Easter Sunday morning, the 9th April 1939, under the guidance of the Seiyid, we walked out to a hill called Hāit al Mu'aqir near the northern side of the wadi. On the way there the Seiyid conjured up for us a picture of the Nisāb of antiquity. According to him it was a garden of delight, thanks to a highly-developed irrigation system. There could not have been much more water then than now but with care, ingenuity and the advantage of a powerful political authority it was in those times securely

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stored in cisterns and distributed thence with accomplished skill. The absence of a powerful and just administration is the principal cause of the present poverty and squabbling. To that lack must also be attributed both the persistent warfare and the deterioration evident in their way of conducting war. Whereas formerly the gardens were held to be inviolable, for the principle source of food of the whole people, that is the date-palms, could not be allowed to perish, in later times gardens had been destroyed and palm trees chopped down or burnt with the aid of kerosene. Even the man who has only few palms now gathers little of their harvest because, owing to the lack of public security, the ripening fruit is stolen. The spring and perennial brook known from the days of antiquity still exist. From the little Wadi Ma'arabat on the south-western side of the wadi the ancients had brought the water to the town through a system of underground stone-built conduits and as we walked through the streets the Seiyid pointed out to us places where culverts had been found.

Outside the town we stood before a broad zone of cultivated fields. They were terraced and channels and dams indicated the present system of irrigation from the soil beds that traverse this area of cultivation. The Seiyid showed us things that lay deeper: he pointed out how the old, underground, masonry conduits went from birka (cistern) to birka. These birak filled during the night when the water was not being used in the town so that during the day it could be distributed, under strict supervision, to the fields. The walls of the birak in some places stood high above the fields, their stones held together by the cement of the ancients, the secret of whose composition is now lost. The Seiyid, embracing the surrounding country with a sweep of his outstretched arm, gave his fancy free-rein in describing the paradise that Nisāb must have been when the caravans laden with the silk and porcelain of China, with the spices of the Indies and the incense, aloes and myrrh, and the gold of Arabia, travelled northwards through the land of Sheba, through Arabia Felix, possibly by way of Mecca and Medina, to the lands whose innumerable altars received the aromatic offerings borne to them along this trade route.

Now this once-cultivated land lies for the most part barren. On some pieces of land cotton was being cultivated. The plants were four years old, or so we were informed, and the produce is woven into cloth in Nisāb. Here was the dwindled relic of a once-thriving cultivation and industry. The seeds of the cotton-plant are also valued for in normal times they are used as cattle-food and the Seiyid remembered a famine thirty or forty

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years before when men, too, had eaten them, as well as the roasted skins of goats and cows.

Other plots were planted with indigo, and, at the further edge of the town, we saw the great pots in which the indigo dye is prepared from the leaves brought in from the fields on donkeys. The quantity of locally produced indigo is far from satisfying the demand of the country for this dye which is at the same time an unguent is thought to keep the skin strong and healthy.

Through the sun-baked plain whence the sinful acts of man have expelled the verdant abundance of paradise we reached the Hāit al Mu'aqir. The hill consisted of huge blocks of stone offering wide, smooth surfaces which had been utilized by the Himyarites for their inscriptions. It was crude work: the big letters were roughly sketched in light-brown, perhaps originally white, on the dark rock-surfaces. They were too indistinct for photographing so we copied the characters of the simple Himyaritic script.

Clinging like flies to the face of the rock we searched and sketched, enthusiastically assisted by the Sciyid, a few little boys and our soldiers. Where the letters had disappeared the Sciyid peered along the surface of the rock and with a finger wetted with saliva traced what had been written many centuries before. Who knows what heathen abomination might not be recorded here? Although this meagre harvest of inscriptions in the form in which we collected them will probably add little to the existing data on this still obscure period of history what we discovered in a few days could undoubtedly be increased during a longer stay, and the incense-road whose starting point was established by Freya Stark might be clearly and definitely traced through Yeshbum and Habbān to the important point of Nisāb. Two days later, a little farther north along this road, we were to pass a landmark where enduring memorials had been left which may serve to draw a little farther aside the veil that conceals from our view the Arabia of the days when the Queen of Sheba ruled in the south and King Solomon in the north.

Back in Nisāb the finishing touches were being put to our preparations for departure for Al 'Atafi, where, at the last well to the north, was the great camping place of the Hammām tribe.

Many applicants for medical assistance kept crowding round us and we would have required hearts of stone to turn them away without the consolation of a little box or a twist of paper with a few pills in it or a piece of bandage and a tube of salve. The reputation of Western medical science

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was not, perhaps, enhanced by these amateurish efforts which will certainly be viewed with disapproval by any medical reader. How much we missed a skilled physician in our small company! But with him we should have certainly made much slower progress.

We had here to part with two men of our escort. They belonged to this country which Captain Hamilton had rightly indicated as the critical part of the journey and now that we had passed through it they were both to spend a few days with their families and then go back to Aden. They said that they left us with reluctance. We should miss, during the rest of the trip, the gay Sālim "al Maksūr" with his hardy endurance and his infectious laughter, and 'Awadh bin 'Ali from the land of the devil-mountains who, in guiding us straight through his fearful rocks, had proved his worth. Of the Sciyid, too, in whose house we had found good counsel and friendship we took leave with regret. He was a good representative of the caste of the Sāda, outstanding in his rude environment by his culture and humane conduct and outlook. He had dared to use the prerogatives of his spiritual rank in Islam for the benefit of Nasārā (plural of Nasrāni, Christian).

The camels stood ready laden. Many of the Nisābis who were looking on accompanied us some way beyond the town. Again we were surrounded by a merry throng, again we walked in their clouds of dust, but this time there was no question of abuse, much less of stone-throwing. For this we had to thank the Sciyid and, in a small measure, the medicines we had distributed. Out in front of the caravan, hand in hand, went the Sciyid and I, our fingers loosely linked in the Arab style. 'Abdallah bin Muhammad Āl Jufri accompanied us as far as Al 'Atafi and then trotted back home on his little donkey.

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AL 'ATAH is an ideal camping-ground for great numbers of beduin. It is an extensive plain where many flat-topped acacias grow in the clean, yellow sand. Over a wide area in the thin shade of these thorny trees, so beloved of camels, low beduin tents of rough, black fabric, woven from goat-hair, had been pitched. The tents were open on all sides but in many of them there was a women's apartment consisting of a square space shut off by tent fabric of the same material except that often white or brown bands had been woven in it by using the hair of white or brown animals.

As there was plenty of room the tents were placed far apart from each other with cattle corrals built of thorn-branches in between. Camels wandered among the tents browsing on the bush tops and an army of fierce watch-dogs defended the camp and the *buyūt ash sha'r* (the houses of goat-hair). The noise of this scene of activity was carried to us as we looked on from a distance. The Hammāmi tribe has 200 men capable of bearing arms and, according to their own estimate, numbers 700 souls, but the actual total must be higher. Packs of dogs came running up at our approach to deter us from camping too close. We were allocated a place near the well where, at that hour of the day, the people were busy watering their cattle in troughs made from hollowed-out tree-trunks.

The Sheikh of the tribe and his brothers gave us a hearty welcome. They were tall, handsome men with kindly, light-brown eyes and voices almost too melodious and soft for such strapping fellows. Although their financial demands were exorbitant and the negotiations did not proceed very smoothly yet they remained aristocrats of the desert, welcomed us with traditional graciousness, sent us a fine sheep for our supper and treated us as though we ought to consider it a privilege to be allowed to travel with their beautiful camels and such stalwart drivers. An appreciative letter from Captain Hamilton was shown us and the high prices he had paid were put forward as a good and firm precedent. Our attempts to contract for transport to the Hadhramaut valley for a lump sum failed. They considered the road too unsure and the possibility of being held up

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and of having to make a detour too great. They insisted on payment by the day and by the camel with half rates for rest days. That was the first stage of the negotiations.

Then came the second: to fix the number of the camels. They tried to press upon us as many as possible while our aim was to travel with a minimum train. It was, therefore, a disappointment to them to find that we men intended to walk and that we expected the escort to do the same. In the end we said nine, they said ten, and when we started there were fifteen camels. After much protesting that number was reduced to eleven and we swore that we would not pay for more than ten. This sort of thing we recognized as one of the inevitable adjuncts to our journey. In the men of the Hammām we had sturdy caravaneers of a more refined and prosperous type than we had met with so far and their camels were beyond all praise. They were tall, light-yellow animals with legs as long as the height of a man: they kept up a smart pace through the endless plains of sand and took us without difficulty through days of travel over steep 'aqabas and rocky plateaux.

We settled down for the night in a confident frame of mind that Easter Sunday under the protection of the Hammāmi camp. Each of us barricaded his sleeping place with pieces of baggage as shelter from the wind and the blown sand. The roasted sheep and rounds of bread had been excellent; the only trouble was that the smell of the feast had attracted numbers of dogs who fought over the discarded bones and continued to prowl round our camp until far into the night.

Nisāb lay 3,300 feet above sea-level. Here we were at the same altitude and after a time the night wind grew cold. We therefore spread our wide, rubber raincoats over the blankets to keep out the wind. We were soon deep in sleep but were roused by an unusual rustling and by the falling of large, warm drops on our faces. From afar off a heavy, rushing sound approached. It was rain, the bounty of Allah, but we cursed it heartily at that moment. The stars had disappeared and the night was pitch dark. With the aid of flashlamps we quickly got out pieces of oilskin and spread them over the baggage which we now stacked in one pile. We ourselves would dry again and the rain would not hurt us but we dragged our mattresses close to the baggage and tried to get some partial shelter under the protecting oilskins. Our rubber raincoats were waterproof and wide enough to allow us to creep completely under them. The rain swept down in gusts. The weather turned cold and the water began to pour off the

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baggage in streams. If only we had kept away from our baggage! The coats kept the rain out but it found its way on to the rubber mattresses and gathered there in patches. Very soon we were lying in little pools of chilling water. Meanwhile it rained and rained. There was nothing to do but to wait in patience. We lay there like incontinent children until finally by a common urge we found relief in uncontrollable laughter which left us gasping for breath. So we waited until the rain stopped and then jumped to our feet and ran about to get warm again. The baggage, the collected plants in their drying presses and the photographic material had kept dry. We ourselves would be warm soon enough and the mattresses and clothes would dry in the sun and wind during the first midday halt.

On Easter Monday morning, 10th April 1939, the caravan prepared for the long journey through the desert to the Wadi Hadhramaut. For the next few days we should find no water and all the qirab had therefore to be taken full and the camels given a final opportunity to drink their fill before beginning their days of waterless marching. Round the great well which the Hammānis had only recently re-dug, lining the deep shaft with stone, activity was in full swing. The well was said to be twenty qāmas deep. I measured the rope used for drawing water and found it to be forty-three yards long. So it was not to be wondered at that the watering of the animals and the filling of the water-skins took a long time: every leather bucket had to be hauled up the height of a fair-sized village church steeple. At last we were off.

After some time we noticed, to our great surprise, that the old Yemeni and his young companion, whom we had last seen in the village mosque at Jābir, were again walking along with the caravan. The old man's foot, after the lancing of the great blister, had healed rapidly and cleanly and then the two of them had slowly carried on and had crossed the war-zone of the Rabizis without hindrance. Who would take any notice of two poor tramps owning nothing but their shabby rags and a staff? Because they had taken a much shorter and easier way they had caught up with us here and from now on the old man would ride for a good stretch on one of our camels every so often while the younger became an increasingly valued, tireless and indomitably cheerful fellow-wayfarer.

The caravan marched straight towards a long, rocky hill like a huge, petrified, prehistoric reptile with a scaly back which stood sharply against the yellow desert-sand on which it lay stretched out. This was the Qarn as Surrān which is composed of blue-grey stone with its strata projecting

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vertically from the sand. From here had been quarried the stone for the lining of the great Hammāmi well and in order to guard the well and the adjacent cultivated fields the tribe were now about to build a stone fort. The necessary blocks of stone were being transported by camel loaded on wooden frames that stuck out on either side of the animal's body.

While the caravan went on we turned aside for a moment to see this work. Talking with the workers we learned that they had found on the face of the rocks all kinds of words and drawings which, according to them, must have been the work of "unbelievers". We promptly went to investigate. Without difficulty we found many roughly-executed, lightly-incised inscriptions which had lost much of their whitish colour and legibility. Among them were drawings of palms and animals. Although of no great size, the Qarn as Surrān, because of its distinctive shape and its situation in the sandy plain, detached from the mountains, is an obvious landmark. Caravans coming from the north steer for it knowing that not much farther beyond lies Nisāb. On its northern side there are great flat surfaces which seem to be specially designed for the inscription of records for posterity. One piece, forty-five feet high and ninety feet long, was covered with well preserved incisions. We stood and gazed in rapture at the profusely illustrated text, but there could be no question of copying all of it and in order to take a photograph we should have to wait for a more favourable light. There is such a quantity of material here that someone ought to make a special trip to Nisāb in order to decipher it and read what was written when traffic on the incense road was at its height. Inscribed there are rows of date-palms, camels and horses and graceful drawings of the *wa'l* (the ibex) with its handsome ridged horns, a subject obviously beloved by the Himyaritic artist. How much more might not be brought to light by a leisurely investigation of the rocks around Nisāb! By combining these revelations with what is known from other sources a specialist might add a chapter to the history of ancient world-commerce and throw further light on the standard of civilization attained by these peoples who are of particular interest to us through their connexion with the Old Testament.

I spent a long time with Wasi copying inscriptions and taking photographs of the Qarn as Surrān. The caravan had disappeared far over the horizon but it was difficult for us to tear ourselves away from the place. In their numerous caravans there must have passed here Minæans, Sabæans and Himyarites. Here they had camped and the artists and scribes among

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them had clambered along those glossy rock-faces or lowered themselves down by ropes to engrave their drawings and records there. They never guessed then that this highly-civilized land would fall silent, that world-commerce would learn to use the sea-routes, that incense would lose its great value, that the irrigation systems would be neglected, that the desert sand would cover again the fruitful palm-groves and fields and that centuries of silence would settle down upon the once busy caravan routes. It is thus that the inscriptions have been preserved untouched and undamaged for our generation to read their message.

Grateful for these experiences we hastened to catch up with the caravan. We had kept with us two soldiers of the escort and there was no danger of our losing our way for these desert-bred people were confident of being able to follow the caravan tracks. We crossed the sandy plain at a sound pace our eyes roving towards the horizon where in the quivering, hot air a line of mountains could be vaguely discerned. A few acacias were scattered in the sand which was otherwise bare of vegetation. Farther on, the way lay over tracts of rough gravel where nothing grew at all. The track led in the direction of a low pass in a spur of the mountains. Against the western wall of the pass was an oblong Himyaritic inscription too worn to be copied by anyone other than an expert.

There, where the caravan had made its midday halt, we rejoined our companions. The sparse shadow of a big sumr afforded some protection from the intense heat of the sun. Bread was baked, eaten with a good appetite and washed down with much tea. For us it was too hot to stay long but our caravaneers were in no hurry and camels are animals with skulls as hard as stone and seemingly quite impervious to the heat of the sun. It took some trouble to get the caravan stirring again after so short a rest but at last the loading was done, and, with a sigh of relief, we saw the eleven camels move off and quickly fall into the regular pace they would keep up all through the burning hours of day, when time seems scarcely to advance, until sunset.

From our midday halting-place we looked out on three volcanoes, the biggest of which, Jebel Murra, was noted by Philby on the expedition with motor-cars and camels he undertook in 1936 and described in his book *Sheba's Daughters*.¹ He reached here his southernmost point and here we crossed his route with which we were to be in longer contact later

¹ *Sheba's Daughters, A Record of Travel in Southern Arabia.* H. St. John B. Philby, London, Methuen & Co.

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in 'Ayād. We pitched our camp for the night in the Wadi Harraj, a depression which is scarcely perceptible to the naked eye.

We had agreed with the escort that we would try to push straight on, without stopping, to 'Ayād where we hoped to find some of Hamilton's men in the furthest advanced British wireless-post in this desert land. There, too, we should be able to inform Aden of our progress and it might perhaps, in the stillness of the night, be possible to pick up on their weak apparatus some of the news with which the world's broadcasting stations were filling the ether. Not that we were exactly yearning for news for we could expect to hear little other than hate and strife and recrimination heralding the approach of a second world war. On the face of it we should be happier without those contacts with the outside world.

'Ayād had been provided with its British military post some months before. A dispute had arisen with the Imām Yahya of the Yemen who claimed some of the neighbouring territory as his own. Later, in the Hadhramaut, we heard that he had even laid claim to the whole of the Hadhramaut with its harbour of Mukalla. We ourselves knew for a fact that the Imām also in theory claimed Aden, with its hinterland, as territory whose Sultans ought to be his vassals. Way back in history there were certainly periods when the sway of the Yemen extended far to the south and east and when the Yemen, the Hadhramaut and the Aden hinterland were all included in Arabia Felix. The Imām Yahya calls himself the legitimate successor of the Himyaritic kings and keeps that idea alive by his use of red powder to dry the ink used in his state documents and letters and in affixing his royal seal. The Arabic word for "red" is present in the root of the word "himyar".

Every now and again the latent conflict of power which has never ceased to exist between the Imām and his neighbours, the British and the Sultans of the Hadhramaut, flames up afresh. This time the cause was Shabwa. Shabwa was an important town in the time of the Sabæans and it is not impossible that it is the "Sabota" of the ancient geographers, or "Sheba", the home of that queen who, through her visit to King Solomon in Jerusalem, won immortal fame.

It had long been known that in Shabwa there lay, buried for the most part under the sand of centuries, ruins of temples and fortresses that awaited exploration and excavation. Beduin of those parts had also spoken of the many inscribed stones that were to be found there. Hence it can readily be understood that nearly every explorer of Arabia has cherished secret

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hopes of seeing and copying material which would no doubt clear our hazy conceptions of the standard of civilization attained in this land at the time of Solomon. Precisely because this territory was a bone of contention between the Imam and the Aden authorities foreigners were kept away from it. The German adventurer Hans Helfritz did indeed succeed, at the risk of his life, in catching a glimpse of Shabwa¹, but it was Philby who, on the journey previously mentioned, had, with commendable seriousness and thoroughness, actually explored, outlined and described Shabwa. After him there came others, including American engineers searching for oil. They seem to have reported good prospects in the country around Shabwa.

The Imām Yahya became uneasy about all this interest in the region and its assumed mineral wealth and sent soldiers to the place. To Aden that was the signal for action. Captain Hamilton took a detachment of his Arab troops, equipped with a machine-gun, in aeroplanes to Nisāb, hired camels from our Hammāmi people and reached Shabwa. The Imām had ordered his troops to retire in order to avoid a fight. Hamilton, too, did not stay long. It was enough to let it be seen that Aden would admit no other power there: for Shabwa to-day has declined into a small settlement of beduin who, in summer, cannot find enough water even for their own modest needs and have to migrate.

'Ayād was thus chosen for the establishment of a military post and both the Imām and the Hukūma in Aden keep a watchful eye on Shabwa with its buried treasure of antiquities and modern motor-spirit, and foreigners, even now, are not looked on with favour there.

For the successful execution of our plans it had obviously been advisable to make it perfectly clear that we had no desire at all to go to Shabwa. The need at Shabwa is no longer for travellers who stay only a day or two, do a little hurried digging and make a few notes, but for archæologists who will excavate systematically and methodically and make an expert investigation of what lies hidden there under the sand-hills.

Neither Helfritz nor Philby had asked permission for his journey to Shabwa. Helfritz was imprisoned by the Imām in his capital of San'ā and Philby came into collision with the Aden authorities. Science, however, owes a debt of gratitude to Philby who brought away some important data about Shabwa, ignoring petty political disputes and augmenting the material for study of the Sabæan-Himyaritic period of civilization in South-West

¹ *Geheimnis um Shabua*. Hans Helfritz. Berlin 1935.

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Arabia. In Aden we had not learned much about this chapter in the history of this remote corner of the desert. It is true that Captain Hamilton told us without reserve what he had seen and showed us drawings of the little bit that he had been able to excavate and sketch but it was only after reading Philby's narrative and hearing the stories told by our escort and by the men in 'Ayād that the political background of what had happened around the ruins of Shabwa became clear.

It was weary work marching without a break until half-past two in the afternoon through a land almost devoid of vegetation except where the ground lay low and, when it rained, the water flowed or gathered in pools. In one such strip of vegetation we saw that morning a gazelle (called here *dhabi*) scud away out of sight. Later we saw three more on the horizon. Just in front of us a hare sprang up and occasionally we heard the song of desert larks. As the country was fairly flat we could see the landmarks from afar and we seemed to travel a long time without getting any nearer to them. That is the discouraging part about travelling through flat desert: the eyes become weary of the monotonous landscape which for hours on end seems never to change. Thus for a long time we had had in sight a low ridge of loose fragments of sandstone with loam between them. We crossed it at last and, descending the other side, could dimly make out, on the edge of some sand-hills in the hazy distance, a grey shapeless mass which gradually resolved itself into the outlines of a castle and several watch towers. It was 'Ayād on the edge of the Rub' al Khālī, the Empty Quarter, where the village well is fully 125 feet deep and yet in long periods of drought usually runs dry. We had now left the broad zone of coastal mountains and plateaux and had approached the "Pure Sea" (Al Bahr as Sāfi), a vast expanse into only the outskirts of which the beduin venture with their flocks, keeping near enough to the edge to be able to fall back on some well where water can be found in the dry months.

On our right as we marched northwards after leaving Nisāb we had seen with increasing distinctness the edge of the high plateau that lay between us and the Wadi Hadrhramaut. It had the typical conformation of the wadi walls everywhere in the Hadrhramaut: first a perpendicular section of limestone falling sheer from the edge of the plateau and then a slope of scree piled up against the underlying strata which, at this distance, could not be identified. In front of the irregular, jagged edge of this high plateau (here called *jōl* or *sōt*) stood, like little islands dotted on the sandy plain, steep pyramidal mountains each surmounted by a limestone column

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with perpendicular sides. The uneven, often deeply-indented, edge of the plateau owes its configuration to the action of the *suyūl* which, after rains, carry off the water from the plateau to the plain below, to the endless, dune-covered plain of the Empty Quarter. The outlets of the Wadi Jirdān and, more distant, the Wadi 'Irma now became visible.

The way to the mud buildings of 'Ayād, much magnified in the mirage, led through sand-hills and stretches of slightly thicker vegetation. The closer we approached the more the towers and forts dwindled in size until at last we saw, encircled by a broad band of tilled fields, a modest desert village. Far from the world it slept there in the quivering midday heat, waiting motionless, as if dead, for the cool of the evening. There was no sound, no movement, not a speck of that white on the buildings that among these Arabs denotes prosperity. Above one of the square, squat, fortress-like dwellings we saw a sloping pole with a rag on it. That must be the British post. The little rag represented the Union Jack and from the sloping pole to a corner of the roof ran a wire—the wireless aerial—that brought the voice of the world to this remote out-station. It was a voice that we were not anxious to hear.

'Ayād became aware of our presence. Life and colour suddenly animated that silent, grey-brown mass. The villagers, soldiers and authorities rushed out to see who was approaching and to welcome the visitors should they prove to be friends. Since Hamilton's soldiers with their strange apparatus had been among them the villagers felt less apprehensive of the unexpected approach of strangers.

The Farthest Desert Outpost

HAMILTON's soldiers stood drawn up in military order; after them came the Sheikh of 'Ayād and the notables and in the background there crowded all the inquisitive males and children of the neighbourhood. We were welcomed ceremoniously and in style. The soldiers fired off their rifles, our escort replied and then came the handshaking. The population of 'Ayād proved to consist of Mashāikh, that is to say people living under the rule of a Sheikh as opposed to the Qabīlis, the beduin who live under the tribal law of the nomads and deem themselves freer and nobler than the settled inhabitants of the villages and oases who live by husbandry or handicrafts. Peasants are less warlike for they have far more to lose by fighting than the beduin who, with their herds, are migratory. Usually the Mashāikh are in alliance with one or more *qabā'il* (tribes) who protect them and are paid for this protection with a part of the harvest.

The Sheikh of 'Ayād did not come very much to the fore; he gladly left the soldiers of Hamilton to act as the lords of the place. They it was who took us to the square mud-tower with its aerial projecting above the roof. We found it good to sit in the dimly-lit soldiers' room on the red blankets spread along the wall and watch them busily dispensing hospitality. Soon hot ginger-coffee appeared and those for whom a cup was available immediately began to quench their thirst and refresh themselves after the heat and fatigue of the way. The others quietly waited their turn, relating meanwhile the eagerly awaited news of Aden and of Hamilton's corps. It was obvious that, after a long spell, life in this remote outpost could become burdensome. Peace and security in the surrounding country were still often disturbed. Recently in the Wadi 'Irma some people had been killed, while in the Wadi Jirdān too all was not quiet.

The edge of the high plateau that we could see to the east forms the frontier of the Hadhramaut territory. There, at that moment, Ingrams, who had leaped to fame in so short a time, was busy putting an end to the internal wars that had exhausted the country. The rich Hadhramis had

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learned in Malaya and in the Netherlands East Indies the value of peace and security and had appealed repeatedly and urgently to the Hukūma in Aden which had at last sent Ingrams to help them rid themselves of their blood-feuds and raids. Ingrams proposed that they should arrange by mutual agreement a truce lasting for a period of three years. A steadily increasing number of tribal chieftains had adhered to the "Sulh Ingrams" (Ingrams' Peace). We had often heard this experiment discussed, either with great praise or else with scorn as showing an attitude to life unworthy of free men and sometimes with suspicion, too, lest it should be only a ruse of the British to conquer the country: at which last observation we could not refrain from asking what sort of hidden treasures they thought the British were looking for in these Arab lands where precious little of anything other than stone and sand was to be found.

From 'Ayād, when the midday dust storms had settled, could be seen the border of the land where Ingrams' Peace was spreading. But in the Wadi Jirdān that peace had not then been accepted and so we should once more need siyāras. Moreover, the people of 'Ayād were unwilling to let our Hammāmi camels go through: they wanted to hire out their own transport animals to us. The Sheikh of 'Ayād slipped quietly away and soon heated arguments were in progress inside and around the soldiers' tower. All this had to be thrashed out before we could set off, for it is important in travelling not to make enemies of the people left behind. Then, too, we had to spend the night in 'Ayād in order to send and pick up wireless messages. This gave Hermann and Wasi an opportunity to take camels and a guide and pay a quick visit to the Jebel al Millh, the Salt Mountain, that lies a few hours distant from the village and to which the village owes its long existence. The people of 'Ayād could produce no evidence of the antiquity of their village for mud buildings, of course, preserve no inscriptions nor do they last for centuries. And while salt is an article that has played a role of at least equal importance with that of incense in the history of man it is possible that the salt of 'Ayād and Shabwa was discovered in later times and did not give rise to salt-routes in the ancient civilized world. As we were approaching 'Ayād we had met several salt caravans and our people had pointed out to us the tracks along which they travelled. It appeared from what Hermann and Wasi had seen and from what they had been told by the workers in the open salt-quarries that a vein of salt from twenty-five to thirty feet thick running along the edge of the Empty Quarter comes to the surface here and near Shabwa.

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Philby visited the Jebel al Milh in 1936 and mentions it in his *Sheba's Daughters*.

In the meantime the Sheikh showed me the village and its surroundings. On the highest point stands the old mud-built keep with thick walls deeply eroded by the desert wind. The Sheikh declared that the keep was more than two centuries old and that it had many times withstood long sieges. About sixty yards from the keep on the little square is the centre of the daily life of the village—the wide well, 130 feet deep. A tunnel runs underground from the keep to the well-shaft, thus rendering it possible to draw water during a siege without any of the defenders exposing themselves in the open.

Towards sunset we pitched our camp at some distance from the village but near enough to keep in touch with the soldiers in their tower. There was not enough room in their chamber for all of us; besides it was stuffy and, we strongly suspected, would harbour small fellow-lodgers. Outside we had only to put up with the night-long interest taken in us by the village dogs which seemed to have as little respect for clods of dry mud as for the sudden flashing of our torches.

At a fixed time in the evening and morning Headquarters in Aden speak with all their wireless stations in South-Western Arabia. At that hour, in each lonely desert-post, sits an Arab operator, waiting intently to see whether contact will be made successfully, whether he will understand and be understood, whether there will be a message for him and his comrades to bring some diversion into their monotonous existence.

At a sign from the operator, who is the most important man in the post, I and his assistants followed him to the flat roof where, under a piece of old canvas in a corner, a small transmitting and receiving apparatus had been set up. For receiving, the current came from dry batteries, but for transmitting the assistants had to labour with all their might cranking a small generator. The current, therefore, had naturally to be economized, listening-in outside the scheduled times was forbidden and the transmitter could be used only for sending official messages. Our telegram to the Political Secretary in Aden fell into the latter category while the courtesy extended to guests gave us an opportunity of listening until late into the night to the programmes broadcast from the capitals of the world. Aden's transmission that night was short because of the increasing international tension. Our operator picked up messages for Mukalla and Saiwūn. He transmitted our telegram but got no acknowledgement of its receipt.

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Aden then closed down and we tried to pick up London, Italy and Egypt. Now and again we could seize some scraps: London sounded very serious, talked of the increasing tension in Europe and announced the seizure of Albania by Italy. From Holland the beginning of mobilization was announced together with an explanation of the reasons for it by Dr. Colijn, the Dutch Prime Minister. For hours I sat and listened to the showy magniloquence of Bari. Italy was building an Empire and her victims, naturally, were in the wrong. What could be heard from the German stations was not calculated to increase one's confidence about the future of Europe: it was charged with menace. At midnight, disappointed, I gave up trying to get into contact with the civilized world. What weary work it was and how it banished all inner peace and contentment!

Frau von Wissmann and my two other companions, just returned, tired but content and smiling from their trip to the salt mountain, were waiting in the bivouac to hear my report of the excursion I had just made into the world we had left behind, the world we had to return to and live in again. The cheerful atmosphere was dissipated: the news awoke in each of us his own personal reactions and cares. Growling and yelping the village curs roved round the camp where we, oppressed by uneasy thoughts, lay wakefully on our mattresses vainly seeking to rest under the silent beauty of the stars.

The square silhouettes of the towers of 'Ayād stood out boldly against the clear night-sky. The two-hundred-year-old central keep was easily distinguishable by its solider shape. Here people lived in everlasting strife because the meagre profits derived from mining and selling salt were a constant temptation to freebooters and had continually to be defended. Finally Great Britain had penetrated as far as here and people had begun to realize that in these parts Western intervention meant first of all internal peace. The next day, or the day after, we should reach the country of Ingrams' Peace. Here, in 'Ayād, we were at the farthest outpost of the advancing Pax Britannica in the hinterland of Aden. With gratitude we appreciated the reality of this blessing of the West. But that night our hearts were heavy with the certitude that the country that had a world mission to fulfil would soon be at grips with a jealous nation guided by criminal fanatics and would have to engage in mortal combat for the right to continue its task. In 'Ayād the prize of victory was the profits of the salt mine: out in the great world beyond, the glory and the gain of world dominion.

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THE next morning, 12th April 1939, we sat on one of the mud dykes that enclose the fields near 'Ayād and make it possible in times of seil to store up great quantities of water and to saturate the loamy soil so that a good harvest can ripen. The water that cannot be stored flows off to disappear in the sandy wastes of the Empty Quarter. That was the secret of the Sabæans and Himyarites, for relics of whose civilization we were hunting: the secret of controlling the precious torrents by means of dams, canal-systems and reservoirs and using their water to create palm-groves and permanent fields out of the dry but fertile loess. We were told that there would be ruins in the Wadi Jirdān, so, in good hope, we left 'Ayād to try and enter that wadi into which no Western explorer had so far penetrated.

The squabble as to whether or not we should continue to use the Hammāmi camels was smoothed over with the help of the Arab soldiers after they had been informed of the express wish of Captain Hamilton. But the son of the Sheikh had to go with us as *siyāra* and brings us through the no-man's-land between 'Ayād and the first villages of the Wadi Jirdān.

The Aden comrades of our escort had done their duty as good hosts and had slaughtered a sheep in our honour. They, together with the Sheikh and the inevitable attendance of villagers, saw us on our way for a short distance into the plain across which we followed the winding camel-track that leads to the entrance of the Wadi Jirdān. Our gaze rested on the spurs of the high limestone plateau that still interposed between us and the Wadi Hadhramaut, a barrier of many days' journey. Like a steep headland the northern wall of the wadi jutted out into the sandy plain: the southern wall begins some miles away to the south-east. On top of the southern headland stood a hamlet of mud huts called Sa'da which we passed at a great distance. Not long before there had been bloodshed between the people of Sa'da and the Hammāmi and it was for this reason that we thought it advisable to pass through the entrance to the wadi under the protection of a *siyāra*.

The entrance to the Wadi Jirdān is very wide. Considerable vegetation

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indicated that abundant seils flow through the wadi and that the sub-surface water does not lie very deep. Not only bushes but also scattered trees were to be seen and sheep and goats could find enough to eat there. Several herds enlivened with their magpie colours and brisk activity the otherwise still and lifeless scene.

A solitary, square, mud hut stood on a hill well out of danger of the seils and offered a view over the surrounding country. The few shepherds kept a safe distance and apart from them not a man was to be seen. When the wadi narrowed a little, in the middle of the course taken by the seil in flood, the caravan came upon an extensive mound of ruins, known as Al Bureira. At a place where the seil-bed forked there stood a strong foundation of limestone blocks well put together. The interstices were now filled with small stones but perhaps in earlier times dry mud had been added to them. The blocks were not cemented together. The plan was a rectangle with rectangular projections. The interior was filled with mud and heaps of stone which led us to surmise that the upper portion of the building had been made of smaller stones, and, higher still, of mud. Its site, in the middle of the seil-bed, indicated that it was some kind of irrigation work: either the bastion of a dam now swept away or a fort defending the approach to a formerly rich wadi. In the northern and southern walls, directly opposite each other, were wide openings and in the front wall, too, (the western side) there seemed to have been an entrance. During our superficial investigations we found no inscriptions but saw a number of hewn stones and we noticed that the heaps of rubble inside the walls were littered with red and brown potsherds. The wadi sides hereabouts would probably produce more relics of the time when the Wadi Jirdān was a caravan route for the products of the Hadhramaut and the surrounding lands that found their way into the great trade road that, passing north and south through Nisāb, ran the whole length of the Arabian Peninsula.

An hour beyond Al Bureira the caravan, which had gone on ahead, had come to rest and so we also were forced to make our midday halt there. But the place did not seem a suitable one; it was uncomfortably close to the first hamlet of the Wadi Jirdān and had no shade other than that of a few 'ilb trees. The hamlet, whose inquisitive inhabitants allowed us, of course, not a moment's rest, was called Al Bārida haqq 'Abd ul Haqq, meaning "the property of" or "ruled over by" 'Abd ul Haqq. It looked attractive with its houses built half of stone and half of mud bricks. But

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scarcely were the first greetings over when we were assailed with questions by the well-armed men who came out to meet us. The usual "Who are you and what have you come for?" was therefore at once gone into very fully.

The belief persisted among our interrogators that we were British officers who had come to reconnoitre the land and prepare the way for British administration. Their first reaction to this assumption was: "These people will have plenty of money; they will pay princely sums; there is much to be made out of them." The second reaction was one of antipathy: "Leave us in peace; leave us our freedom; there is nothing for you here." The money question was broached at once. Our unwillingness to loosen our purse-strings very far was obviously disappointing. It soon appeared that they had had contact with Captain Hamilton who, returning from his expedition to Shabwa, had camped in the entrance of the wadi with twenty-five soldiers, 100 camels and a great deal of baggage. He had been liberal with his money. These men were not ashamed to beg openly for alms which they referred to not by the name current throughout all other Arab lands—*bakhshish*—but by the term *fish*. "Are we not letting you travel without hindrance through our territory?" they argued. To which we rejoined: "But are not we on the outskirts of 'diyār Ingrams'—the territory of Ingrams—where, we have been told, reigns his 'sulh', his peace?" That loosened their tongues. Part of the people had been lured into the peace by attractive promises but they were now deeply disappointed: the peace amounted only to words, nothing but words! After signing the voluntary agreement to observe a three years' truce a neighbouring tribe had committed hostile acts against the people of a village near by and their marksmen, sniping from the high rim of the valley, had shot three relatives of the Sheikh living in the village below. And what had Ingrams done? Had he sent aeroplanes or soldiers with machine-guns to inflict immediate and exemplary punishment on the guilty? No! nothing had happened. So they ran on and worked themselves into a state of excitement over this useless interference in their affairs. Rather would they remain free to carry on their wars and practice their right to wreak *immediate* vengeance on such assailants. Earnestly I took the side of Ingrams and advised them to be patient. It was true that the Hukūma was slow to move but treaties the Hukūma had sanctioned were not to be broken with impunity. Let them wait and they would see that they could rely on the British.

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The men were not convinced or even won over into a friendlier frame of mind. We saw clearly enough that in this part of "diyār Ingrams" we should still have to have siyāras. For these a sum of twenty Maria Theresa dollars for each man was asked. Muhsin had the patience and the experience to undertake the long-drawn-out but necessary negotiations and the sum he finally named was accepted by us without question. We had developed a regular technique in bargaining: we would begin the negotiations and stick at a certain sum. Muhsin, their fellow countryman and brother in the faith, would then come forward as an intermediary and bring both parties to accept a compromise. The tension created at the beginning would thus be relaxed, the bargain would be clinched with a handclasp and good relations re-established.

The negotiations here led to an acceptable enough conclusion, but these people, all the same, were disagreeable. After we had long and patiently answered their questions they continually harked back to the same point: why were we tiring ourselves with travelling through their poor and insecure country? The discussion began to border on the acrimonious and it became clearly necessary to leave them and travel on. Two men, who had stood a little apart, then unexpectedly asked whether I understood Malay. To convince them I answered in the Malay language and asked them if they had been in Java.

"Yes," they replied, "we spent some years there."

"Then," I said, "if you know the way we do things in Java and have enjoyed the hospitality of our Government there how can you find it in your hearts to receive people from Java in so discourteous a fashion?"

They replied that they would have wished it otherwise but they were poor and had no influence in their village. On my asking if they had not been received in a proper manner in Java and whether they had not been given an opportunity to make some money there, we learned that they had been able in a few years to save 600 guilders but that in this poor country they had soon spent it. Were we going from the Hadhramaut to Java? they wanted to know. Would there be a boat sailing direct? Could they go with us? I told them I was going later from Mukalla to Java and they might come with me if they had about 600 guilders each, that is 150 guilders for entrance tax, 200 guilders for the steamer fare and the rest to give themselves a start in Java. This temporarily damped their enthusiasm. Still, it was encouraging to find that even in this hostile outer fringe of the Hadhramaut there were people who knew something of orderly conditions,

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who had families and interests in Java and on whose help we could count, chiefly because all such people are at heart grateful for the chance to improve their standard of living that they have been given there. In these wild men, clad only in a loin-cloth and armed with jambīyas, it was impossible to recognize fellow citizens of Java. Asked why they did not wish to stay on in their own country now that the Peace of Ingrams was approaching and they would soon be able to pursue undisturbed their farming and cattle-raising, they answered that while here they could with hard labour win a poor and uncertain harvest, Java offered them the opportunity of making a far better living. They would never again be so foolish as to think that, having saved 600 guilders, they were rich and could buy women and cattle and live a life of ease in their native country.

In the hope of meeting more Malay-speaking people we set off again after this pause, which was more of a strain than a rest, and penetrated further into the obviously hostile atmosphere of the Wadi Jirdān. The wadi became gradually more beautiful and striking. The caravan followed the broad bed of the seil, sometimes along a sandy path, more often over rounded pebbles that hurt the soles of the feet. Along the sides of the wadi lay thick deposits of loess which were remarkably well tilled and divided into terraced fields. The edges of the terraces were protected against the scouring of floods by skilfully built stone walls. Near the group of fields were hamlets or isolated, fortified dwellings. We were not allowed to approach very near them: no Westerners had yet been here and the people were afraid of our strange appearance. Moreover, we were still in the war-zone where blood had flowed only a short time before, where feuds still smouldered and might flare up without warning at any moment.

The caravan was ordered to keep close together and to follow the path which wound through the middle of the seil-bed. In this way our approach could be seen at a distance from the villages situated on the higher terraces and any risk of surprising or alarming the inhabitants was avoided. When we wanted to go up on to the loess terraces to photograph the little villages, or the peasants at their ploughing, one of the siyāras had to go ahead to ask permission and reassure the people. But even then we had to keep well away from the houses. Once or twice, attracted by the beauty of the scene or by the striking setting of some village stronghold, we would silently approach by ourselves to take a few pictures, but the screams of women, who no doubt saw us from the houses, warned us not to go nearer.

On the edge of the high plateau, sometimes on the very lip of the sheer

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cliff, stood towers that serve as observation posts and a first line of defence against an approaching enemy. In addition, every isolated house in the wadi was a fortress and the little villages were defence-systems where two or more strong towers rose up above the lower dwellings that, huddled close together, formed with their outer-walls a continuous protecting wall for the whole group.

The wadi became more and more attractive. It bore a strong resemblance to the best wadis of the Hadhramaut. While the sides were here and there broken by lateral valleys for the most part they presented the same basic features as in the Hadhramaut: at the top a cliff of limestone with gigantic projecting bastions falling sheer from the edge of the plateau, then slopes of loose detritus piled up high against the foot and concealing from the eye the strata—usually sandstone—that lie beneath the superimposed limestone mass. The sides of the wadi are eroded by wind and other factors and hence are pitted with curious hollows scooped in dazzling white limestone and overhung by mushroom-shaped projections of more durable rock. The broad seil-bed in the wadi is full of water-worn pebbles often as big as footballs formed from the limestone of the high plateau, but in some places are stretches of sand or light-brown loess, as soft as a carpet, washed down from the terraces that in many spots flank the seil-bed. In the Wadi Hadhramaut, if one looks down into the valley from the edge of the high plateau, one sees the loam-terraces as a dark-green mass of palm-groves, while closer to the seil-bed the fields planted with corn and trefoil make a mosaic of varied shades of green.

In the Wadi Jirdān the palm-groves were lacking but the number of 'ilb trees increased as we advanced. A new sort of tree, called *meshōt*, appeared in the fields near the villages and gave us the pleasure, long denied, of looking once more at tall trees. The 'ilb trees, once the harvest of the dōm fruit is gathered, are lopped. Goats and sheep strip the cut boughs of their leaves and the branchless trees cannot then overshadow the cultivation around them.

We passed village after village but did not succeed in getting into conversation with the inhabitants. At our approach they screamed and scolded; the men forbade us to come close and the women fled protesting into the safety of the village walls. Only the field-workers carried on with their ploughing or dragging of earth to build up little dykes or fill in the low places of their land—an operation performed with a wooden board set at an angle and drawn by cattle. Camels also are used for ploughing.

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Continually shouting at their beasts, the ploughmen follow their primitive implements which yet manage to plough a deep furrow in the bone-dry soil. The scene might have been one of rural peace and prosperity but for the fortress-dwellings and the watch-towers, one or more of which were always to be seen on the higher points, and the fear and the deterrent attitude of the population which clearly indicated that insecurity and internal wars often threatened and disturbed the works of husbandry. Obviously there was work for Ingrams here. Even the men who were loudest in rejecting the idea of British intervention could not hide their disappointment that the "sulh Ingrams" had not immediately and effectively penetrated their wadi and that they still lacked what the Hadhramaut already possessed and what in their hearts they had all long desired.

The houses in the Wadi Jirdān merit special attention. They differ from those in all other parts of South-Western Arabia. Architecture has attained a high standard in this country and each region has its own peculiar character. This is a subject which would provide material for engrossing study to an architect with a training in ethnology. Differences in climate between high mountains and hot plains have led to the building of different types of houses and strongholds in different places and have necessitated also the use of different materials. The rainy highlands of the Yemen demand the use of stone as a building material. There the people learned how to hew stone from the crags and build massive dwellings and fortresses on inaccessible ridges. The dangers of war necessitated the placing of such buildings in strategic positions and the fortresses themselves had to be built in such a way that they could withstand hail and rainstorms as well as human forces of destruction. The Yemenis enlivened the gloomy exterior of their buildings with window-frames and bands of whitewash. In places where light-green, red and blue-grey rocks were to be found the princes and merchants built their palaces and summer-houses in stone of these gay colours. There they developed in the Yemen an architecture full of variety, strength and beauty, an art with a character of its own which undoubtedly goes back to the golden age of the Sabæans and Himyarites.

The Hadhramaut is the other centre of architecture in Southern Arabia, an offshoot with its own development of the legacy of ancient civilization that has been handed down from father to son and enables present-day builders to construct without plans or designs, carrying in their heads the traditional lines and measurements to which they work.

The nearer we approached to the Hadhramaut the greater beauty and

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variety of building we should see. The Hadhramaut, which has close contacts with the outside world would, alas, also show us how dreadfully an art degenerates when it abandons its own traditions and begins to imitate and in doing so loses the understanding of its material, of its environment and of the circumstances to which it is native. But of that later.

The Wadi Jirdān shows by its architecture that it is one of the approaches to the Hadhramaut and that it has preserved something of the Hadhramaut's ancient civilization. The houses here are for the most part built of the pale, grey-brown mud on which they stand and they are so much at one with the landscape that under a vertical light they are often hard to distinguish from it. The castles serve to protect their own inhabitants and the people of the villages as well. The walls are thick, the windows small and the lower part practically without opening or decoration. Towards the top the walls necessarily become thinner and thus their lines converge upwards. The floor of the storey where the living rooms are situated projects beyond the walls with a corbel-like finish; the same is the case with the next storey. The flat roof has a parapet which rises to an ornamental point at each corner and in the middle of each side. In the centre of the flat roof stands a slender replica in miniature of the whole tower, probably intended as a look-out post, which gives to the building an air of refinement. What unknown artist conceived this entity so simple, so well adapted to its purpose and yet so pleasing to the eye? What a feeling for proportion and for relation to environment those builders of the mud fortresses of olden days must have had! The machicolations of the storeys where the living quarters are situated are so fashioned as to allow speech through their open-work vents with people standing at the foot of the tower. By the same means a key might be lowered to enable them to gain an entrance or a little basket could be let down for small purchases. Thus the occupants of the tower are not seen from outside—for inside they are in semi-darkness—neither do they expose themselves to the danger of hostile bullets. The slender miniature towers that are built in the middle of the flat roofs characterize the domestic fortress-architecture of the Wadi Jirdān: they are not found anywhere else in this part of Arabia.

The village of Al 'Amīq, with an imposing background formed by the much eroded, white cliff of the Jebel 'Amīq, is one of the biggest and most beautiful villages in the central part of the Wadi Jirdān. We passed it when the sun was flooding it with the full glow of soft afternoon light.

Hamlet after hamlet followed. In many places the men were busy

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ploughing the fields. Near one of the villages, as we went along our path through the seil-bed, we met a group of children some of whom were bold enough to risk a talk with us. They said that they had been to a Qurānic school in the neighbourhood and were now returning home. But when we tried to photograph them warning shouts rang out from the village and the children obediently disappeared.

In some places in the wadi water was standing in pools where the last seil had scoured deep under some rocky bluff. On our proposing to camp at such a place the *siyāras* said it was impossible—we must go on further to some less frequented spot. So the caravan carried on while one side of the valley with its villages was already entirely in shadow and the setting sun bathed the mud houses on the other side in a rich orange light. Evening fell and still we travelled on, tired, but kept awake by the strange beauty of this new country. At last the guides gave the signal to camp. This choice was an unexpected one for the spot did not seem to be very suitable. Firstly, it was as thickly inhabited as elsewhere and secondly, there was nothing underfoot but big round boulders on which it was difficult even to keep one's feet. Asked why they chose that place, the *siyāras* answered that the two villages that lay high above us, An Nuqaiyib on one slope and Al Qāif on the other, were at strife with each other: hence, if the people of one village forbade us to camp here, then the other village would take our part against their rivals.

This piece of strategy did not sound very reassuring but now it was quite dark and both men and animals were tired out and longing for rest. So the camels were unloaded, everyone helping with a will, firewood was dragged up and soon the thorn-branches were flaming high and weirdly lighting up the scene for the busy workers.

The attention of the villagers was attracted by the camp fire and they came scrambling down the slope in alarm to see what was going on. They quickly inquired who we were and what we wanted. They were put at ease by the presence of our *siyāras* but reproached them for not having announced our arrival or asked permission to camp. Meanwhile someone had observed us from the other village, and, from the opposite side of the valley, an odd assortment of figures emerged out of the night into the circle of light of our camp-fire. They would go one better and give their neighbours from over the way a little lesson in the proper way to receive strangers. They let off the traditional volley of salutation which made us all start up in alarm. Our escort grabbed their rifles and leaped to the

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front but, with a sigh of relief, we then perceived the friendly intention of the surprise volley. There was some handshaking but everyone's nerves were suddenly set on edge again by a shrill screeching of women which issued from the towers above us. More men, also armed with rifles, came running down, screaming at those who were already crowding round us. The *siyāras* could now no longer control the rising storm and left the field to Muhsin and his men. These now tried to make themselves heard but the yelling had risen to a hysterical pitch; the new-comers shrieking that we could not camp in that place but must move on at once. Some worked themselves up as if they were maniacs and had to be held back by their comrades while all the time trying to tear themselves free. The din was like all bedlam let loose. I asked Muhsin if there was any danger. "Maybe," he said, "but there is nothing to be done about it except to keep calm and await the outcome." We turned our eyes repeatedly away from the crowd in order to avoid being affected by their wild excitement. Frau von Wissmann, who understood not one word of all that was being yelled at us, stood behind us and looked with alarm at the raging mob.

Some of the ringleaders broke free from the fighting crowd and began to tug at Hermann and myself, shouting abuse. All the rest watched and the noise lessened. We offered no active resistance but did not let ourselves be pulled away. Then, suddenly, the tension relaxed a little. The frenzy of the men who had laid hold of us spent itself and they seemed momentarily to be put out of countenance. The *siyāras* darted to the front and seized the opportunity to demand that we should be treated in a seemly manner. We were travelling in accordance with traditional practice with *siyāras* from this wadi: why then were they interfering with us?

The fire-brands, having got their breath again, began to retort and had to be restrained by their comrades again. But now the calmer elements got a chance to speak and on Muhsin's advice we addressed our answers to them and then went and ostentatiously sat down on an outspread blanket: we were not going to let ourselves be driven away!

The two parties deliberated. They had heard from me that we were not British and that I was on my way to Java. That was an unpleasant surprise for here also, it seemed, there were links with the Netherlands East Indies. But could I prove that I had something to do with the Government of Java and could I speak Malay? I told them then, in that language, what I thought about their behaviour here and that I knew how differently they had been treated in our territories. "Who among you has been in Java?"

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I asked. "Who understands me?" Some of them tried to hide behind others and so I repeated the question in Arabic. At that the dissemblers were pointed out and pushed to the front. It transpired that one of those who had done most shouting had been in East Java. He was told a truth or two about his offensive behaviour and about our power to prevent his going back to that rich country and to his possessions there. He tried to excuse himself and began to lie. The bystanders, who did not understand what was being said, observed this change with amazement. A brother of the loud-mouthed one came to his aid saying that he was not a man of standing or importance and had no right to push himself to the fore. If only we had announced our coming beforehand by letter we should have been well received. We then explained how long we had already been on the road, how our plans had had to be repeatedly changed and that we could not therefore make arrangements beforehand. Nevertheless, we had abided by the custom of the country and had come here under the protection of *siyāras* from this wadi.

The party who had staged the wild demonstration of protest were now ashamed of their attitude and after some deliberation amongst themselves invited us to spend the night in their village. The brother of the ringleader had something extra to offer by way of reparation thinking, doubtless, of his family's interests in Java. He came up privately to ask whether we would allow him to send us some milk. We consented and it was not long before a great wooden bowl of buttermilk was brought into the camp and a pan of buttermilk porridge was bubbling over the camp fire.

The hostility and turmoil had subsided but interest in us remained. The light of the camp fire was reflected in the eyes and on the white teeth of the *Jirdānis* and on the dull, silver bands with which the barrels of their rifles were decorated. They asked many questions about what we were doing and there was much talk about "Ingrams' Peace" and the impending British intervention. Long after we had lain down to sleep fresh visitors still came, their black silhouettes standing out sharply against the starlit sky as they descended the steep slope to our bivouac and sat down on the edge of the camp to talk with others about this first visit of strangers to their wadi. Did it augur good or ill? Clearly a new age was approaching.

We were late next morning for we slept heavily after the fatigues and experiences of the day in the Wadi Jirdān. Our camp lay more than 3,300 feet above sea level and the night was pleasantly cool. The truculent fellow with the Javanese connexions presented us next morning with

Wadi Jirdān

another bowl of milk, which we gratefully accepted, but the honeycombs he brought with it we politely refused, for the man had to be made to understand that our account remained unsettled.

It was later than usual when the caravan was ready to start and so there was light enough to photograph the attractive villages of An Nuqaiyib and Al Qāif. As we went on the wadi retained its attractiveness but became narrower and the villages fewer; the loess borders were thinner here but still intensively cultivated. Long catchment dams of stone led the water in times of seil into conduits hewn in the rocky sides of the valley. Although they were primitively buttressed with branches and tree trunks these dams had to be rebuilt after every flood.

People were busy harrowing with light grey oxen: the harrow being a simple board dragged over the clods to break them up with a man standing on the board to give weight. This, in contrast to the ploughing with camels, was silent work for at that task the ploughman's tongue, with which he guided his animal, was never still.

We now approached the 'Aqaba Kanīfa by which we were to leave the wadi and reach the plateau of Jebel Sōt. The Hammāmi camels were animals of the plains and although the climb was not difficult much attention and effort was required to lead the animals up the path. The view back into the wadi had great beauty. Higher up other villages and cultivated fields were to be seen but beyond them the land seemed to be an uncultivated and uninhabited grazing ground for camels, sheep and goats.

The Plateau of the Jebel Sôt

AFTER some hours of climbing the caravan reached the head of the 'aqaba. The wadi then lay 1,200 feet below us for we were here more than 4,500 feet above sea level. It was one o'clock in the afternoon and blazing hot. We looked out over endless, rocky plains above which the hot air quivered in a haze under a whitish-grey sky that hung like a dome of blinding quicksilver. In the distance stood low, flat-topped hills on whose gentle slopes grew scattered, dried-up dwarf trees brown as the rock they stood on. Down in the wadi there were men and animals and the refreshing touch of green; here we had entered a silent, colourless, formless realm, relieved only by the distant, unchanging, vague lines of the flat-topped hills each identical with the other. In the midday heat it was a barren, forbidding land. On the border of the region, that is along the slope of the wadi and on the tops of the hills, we observed rows of stone-heaps that were visible as dark specks from far away. When the *siyāras* were asked about them they replied that these structures dated from the pre-Islamic, heathen times: they were *kufri* (derived from *kufr*, unbelief).

What was their purpose? They were heathenish and therefore meaningless; perhaps heathens lay buried under them. That seemed improbable. We thought rather that they had some connexion with the defence of formerly important wadis and of the roads leading to them. They proved to be piles of loose stones: cubes more than a yard in length, breadth and height, stretching in long rows in at least two directions beginning from bigger cubes of stone that lay in the middle of them. Wherever we looked we observed these cubes standing out sharply against the unchanging, empty horizon. In these probably Himyaritic remains no inscriptions or other indications were to be found. On the rocky plateaux of the Hadhramaut we saw all kinds of ruins which suggested graves and fortifications, but this was the first time that we had seen so many rows of well-built stone-heaps placed at regular distances from each other and all similar in shape. Were we now travelling along a great trade route of the ancients?

Although men and animals were tired from climbing it was impossible

The Plateau of the Jebel Sôt

to rest on the edge of the plateau for not a scrap of shade was to be had. The caravan therefore continued for more than an hour until we reached a place where some little trees raised hopes of our finding shelter. As usual, we were disappointed and were soon obliged to get moving again for the heat of the sun is easier to bear when one is moving. We were now once more by ourselves: we were travelling farther and farther away from the haunts of men and the loneliness drew us closer together and bred in us a friendly, considerate spirit. The reaction to the excitements of the wadi also helped to strengthen a feeling of comradeship in the whole caravan.

Far in the distance the square shape of a fortress-tower presently broke the horizon of the jöl landscape. Hard by there would be a handful of little houses clustered in a hollow where the infrequent rains washed down sufficient soil to support a few 'ilb trees and to make possible the fortuitous gathering of a scanty harvest. The inhabitants would however chiefly depend for a livelihood on their small cattle and exist on the water that gathers in the holes and crevices of the surrounding rocks. The caravan passed at a safe distance without meeting a soul. The sun was already down when we reached our camping-place for the night, the head of the Wadi Huraif. This wadi, at its head, has a steep fall. The water, flowing down in times of rain, has worn in the limestone a deep groove pitted with great holes which hold water throughout a normal dry season. From these holes the members of a small beduin tribe draw their water. As is also the custom in the Hadhramaut these people do not live in tents but in caves in the rock. The siyāras showed the way to the water as soon as we had camped. Between steep walls of limestone we saw in the semi-darkness a mirror-like gleam. We were seized by the desire to have a bath and against the advice of our escort were soon scrambling down by the light of our torches. Then, squatting by the water, we enjoyed the luxury of a leisurely soaping and rinsing while a harsh chorus of invisible frogs greeted us from the dark. Like new men and in better trim to stand the rigours of the night we climbed up the rock-face again. Our evening meal, consisting of oatmeal porridge boiled with a few spoonfuls of milk-powder and eaten with a cup of broth, was a welcome change after the heavy bread.

Thanks to the cold we made an early start next morning, Friday, April 14th. The caravan made slow progress because there were many flat-topped hills to climb, cross and descend again. The path also led through the head-water area of several wadis and our camels were unused to rocky slopes. Shortly after setting off we passed a cliff in which there was a series of wide

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but shallow caves. Here lived the beduin tribe whose menfolk had come the previous evening to make our acquaintance in camp. The women and girls were busy just then driving out herds of black goats from several of the caves.

As we crossed these table-lands we could see far and wide over a country of flat fields of rock that has been deeply scored, in the course of many centuries, by the streams feeding the wadis. We crossed the watershed between the Wadi Jirdân and the Wadi al Hajar, distinguishable only by the direction of the wadis that begin there, for nothing in the shape of the ground indicated the change. The path here followed a wadi in which grew fresh, green grass and 'ilb trees from which we brought down showers of dôm fruit by throwing stones. We were very astonished not to find here any traces of inhabitants. The wadi was full of mosquitos which were so ravenous that we could kill ten of them at a time on our arms. Might not malaria have driven settlers away from this fertile, dank piece of land? The siyâras said that it was a country full of evil spirits which is perhaps a different way of saying the same thing.

In front of us slunk away a fox with a beautiful, bushy tail, but light-grey in colour, whereas the foxes we had seen elsewhere in Arabia were all reddish-brown. A little farther on, but still in the wadi of the evil spirits, we saw a strange sight. Two camels lay straight across the path, one of them motionless. As we drew near we saw that one of the animals had its head caught fast between the hobbled forelegs of the other. He had struggled to free himself and was almost strangled. When released by our men from this deadly embrace he opened his eyes but could not manage to stand.

On the plateau of Jebel Sôt progress continued slow, for the rocky slopes of table-lands, up and down which we climbed, although not high, were numerous. The camel-drivers were not accustomed to this kind of country: they did not know how to lead their animals properly or to secure the loads in the right way for climbing. On Muhsin's advice I gave them a serious warning: either they must march better or they would be sent back before they had seen the Hadhramaut. From then on we made better progress for all the camel-men were eager to see the land about which they were all the time hearing more and more marvellous tales.

In this region we passed the first of the classical water-holes of the jôls. Elsewhere in the Hadhramaut these water-holes are called *neqāba* (plural *nuqab*), but here that word is unknown and they are called *hissu*.

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All are made on the same plan. They are water-cisterns cut in the limestone, access being gained through a narrow shaft. The water from the rare rains is led to the mouth of the *hissu* from as wide an area as possible by shallow conduits alongside of which run low banks of loose stone and then flows through the narrow entrance-shaft into the cistern where it can be stored for years on end. Evaporation is prevented by the narrowness of the shaft. Usually two *hissus* lie close together and a wide space round them is enclosed by walls, probably as a defence in wartime, but having also this advantage, that the *hissu* can be recognized from a great distance. Not much can be expected of water caught and stored in this way: the older it is the more it stinks and the fouler it tastes. Sometimes, too, one is disappointed by finding a little moist slime where drinking-water had been expected; but this happens rarely for a caravan always takes care to ask the few people it meets about the condition of the water-holes along the route. Water is the most important thing of all for travellers in these parts especially if there has been a long, dry spell and a drought may sometimes last for years. We had the good luck to be travelling after an unusually good rainy season so that the holes and crevices in the rocks still held water that was fresh and palatable. The construction of the *hissus*, which probably took place centuries ago, has made it possible to travel over the plateaux of the Hadhramaut in all seasons. But they suffice only for a moderate caravan traffic.

The *jöl* across which we were travelling, the Jebel Sôt, is a prosperous one. Not only did we pass many hollows where there was sometimes a small settlement with tilled fields and some 'ilb trees but also there were holes and clefts which pierced through the limestone stratum to less porous rock where water collected and thus made possible the existence of flocks of sheep and goats. Moreover we repeatedly passed on our way stone structures which, although now ruined, yet showed that in ancient times people had either lived here or had passed through in great numbers. So long as nothing further is known about them we can only call these structures Himyaritic remains. Their sites seem to have been chosen, for preference, along the edges of the plateaux. Before descending towards the cultivated fields in the hollow where the hamlet of Ar Rôdha lies, we saw on the gradual, rocky slope a number of small heaps of stone, some round, others oval. Near one of them stood two well-cut square columns of stone four feet high. Linked up with these columns were other flat stones, most of them still upright, set in a rectangle. Himyaritic graves or sanctuaries?

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No inscription was to be found that might solve the problem. The guides said that these square-hewn, beam-like stones were not of the locality but brought from overseas. This was their explanation, no doubt, of the presence of stone columns which no one here now knew how to make. Some of the heaps of stone that we passed were not of ancient origin and so the *siyāras* and local beduin could tell us something about them. They were shelters built to protect new-born animals against the piercing night-blasts. For themselves, too, the beduin sometimes build such stone wind-breaks. They recognized these at once and were therefore convinced that the other erections were the work of pre-Islamic peoples.

We passed at a great distance several hamlets which were recognizable from afar by their square defence towers. In the afternoon the *siyāras* led the caravan through the cultivated fields of a little village whose population was known to be friendly. The people who saw us did not retreat but came running up to kiss our hands, an honour accorded only to the *Sāda*, the descendants of the Prophet. We heard our escort quietly pointing out their error to them. "But," protested the villagers, "they *look* like the *Sāda* with their beards and outlandish clothes." Only our sun-helmets had seemed to them a little suspicious. Surrounded by these simple people we filled our pockets with fruit lying under their *dōm* trees while some of them shook the branches and sent an abundance of berries hailing down.

Towards evening we were again on the edge of the plateau and at Dal'at al Muleibi, near two *hissus* from which we drew water, we pitched our camp for the night.

On Saturday, April 15th, a grey mist hung over the already dull and monotonous Sôt and visibility in the early morning was very restricted. The plateau, covered with loose stones that rang underfoot like metal, was a rocky plain without colour or shape for as far as the eye could reach. Basin-like hollows led to the heads of wadis, all in the drainage area of the Wadi al Hajar, which, flowing southwards into the Indian Ocean, is the only perennial stream on the borders of the Hadhramaut. Eight years earlier Hermann and I had followed this stream returning from our first journey in the Hadhramaut after having had to give up our attempt to reach Aden overland. It had been a long time before we could repeat the attempt but now we seemed to be succeeding in the reverse direction. It was thus with a feeling of satisfaction that we now looked down on the ravines that form the head of the Wadi al Hajar, the most westerly physical feature that we had been able to reach on that former occasion.

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The sun broke through and swept the mists away and we again saw a number of those piles of stones that we assumed to be of Himyaritic origin. Some of these monuments appeared to be more or less intact with big, flat stones arranged upright in a rectangle which was often connected by a narrow, stone lane with a circle of small, standing stones, the interior of the circle being floored with small, flat, weathered stones of greyish-blue colour. More piles of stone, some with a diameter of six yards at the base and of massive, high proportions, were to be seen at the edge of the plateau. Two heaps would often mark the spot where the path reached this edge. These must have been landmarks set up in the days when the Sôt had only just acquired its roads and when it was necessary, in these featureless wastes of stone, to mark out the path and make it recognizable over great distances.

Close to one of the Himyaritic stone-heaps lay the head of a wadi. From above, where we were, we could not see that in the depths, between walls of rock, a little strip of paradise lay hidden. One or two of the soldiers of our escort approached the edge, peered down, then disappeared and did not return. We too went to have a look and there, among abundant verdure, we saw the gleam of a crystal clear pool. The place was called *At-Tawila* in the *Wadi Faraj*. The caravan had been unable to see anything of it from the path and had gone past. What an undreamed-of delight it was to forget here, for a while, the colourless wastes of stone, to see trees and bright-green plants, to hear birds, to see frogs plunging and oneself to float in the delicious, lukewarm water or to stand naked and wet and let the warm desert wind play caressingly over the skin in this little secret place where nature had bloomed extravagantly amid a wilderness of rocks. While we were dressing again we saw a peacock-blue lizard basking in the sun. The species is fairly common in the high mountains of the Yemen. These handsome creatures have a rose-coloured band near the base of their long, thin, tapering tail, the rest being of the same brilliant blue as the body. They are not edible and are therefore left in peace.

We made our midday halt near the little village of *Rual* which we could see lying at some distance in a hollow near a few cultivated fields. At regular intervals we had to employ our midday rest in giving our collection of pressed plants an extra drying. It took much time to lay out the little bundles in the sun and wind and weigh each one down with stones but it had to be done, for the experience of former journeys had taught us that only repeated dryings would keep the plants, especially the juicy succulents, from decay.

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In the afternoon our way led over an endless, level plain. Nowhere was there water or fodder for the animals. We had, indeed, passed a hamlet where we could have bought camel-fodder and obtained water but reluctance to spend the night near an inhabited place had made us push on and now we were obliged to continue even after sunset in the hope of finding a hollow where there would be some bushes. There were no requests to halt now from the camel-drivers: it was they who were anxious to push on, for the camels had to graze during the night. During the day the animals had worked hard and the end of their labours was not yet in sight. It always surprised me to see how the camels could work all day and then wander about all night browsing on thorns, covering big distances in doing so, for the little trees and bushes grow far apart, and yet be able to go on again next morning. Sleep they did not seem to need.

This marching after sunset was very tiring. How in the pitch darkness they managed to find a good spot remained the secret of the *siyāras* and the camel-drivers but there were indeed bushes near the place chosen and, with the help of our torches, the men were able to gather firewood. Once the camp fire was burning all feeling of isolation was forgotten. The camels, guided by their noses, found their way through the darkness to places where there was something growing. Each one of us cleared away as many stones as would give him room to spread his mattress and to pile up a few cases and boxes as shelter from the night wind. We had walked that day from six o'clock to twelve and from three to half-past seven and we were tired. Stretched out on our mattresses staring up at the stars, we waited in silence for the cook. The experiences of the day passed through our minds. It had been a long, hot march; our eyes smarted with weariness from gazing on the dazzling fields of stone and from continuously looking down to pick out a safe place for every step we took. But now the night wind cooled our sunburnt skins and the dark was restful to the eyes. Tea was brought to quench our thirst; then came a mug of broth, a tin plate of porridge and two hollow rolls of bread, baked round stones. Warmed and satisfied we all set about pressing plants, sorting and arranging stones, emptying and reloading cameras and writing up diaries. Then, after more mugfuls of hot tea each one crept under his blankets, drew his rain-coat over him from top to toe and sank into a deep sleep which lasted until half-past four when the alarum-watch, which Hermann was the only one to hear, went off. A little later he pitilessly dragged us out, one after the other, from under our warm coverings.

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The collecting of the camels in the morning was invariably a troublesome business. Usually this task was given to the one or two boys who were always attached to our caravan. They had to get up long before the others and when the remainder were ready to start on the road had already covered a fair stretch of country in their search. Occasionally some of the camels, driven by hunger, would have wandered away so far that the grown men had to help in tracking them down. That could greatly delay the start in the morning. And so it happened in Mudmud; but nevertheless we were determined to try and reach that day the head of the 'aqaba, the steep descent into the Wadi 'Amd. The men always preferred to begin the difficult and often dangerous work of descent when they were fresh.

The notorious 'Aqaba Bā Tēs is famed far and wide for the daring of its construction. We passed that day through the drainage area of the Wadi Rakhīya and came into that of the Wadi 'Amd. Crossing the territories of the tribes of Hamīm and Bā 'Alawi we reached the borders of the country of the Bā Tēs.

During the morning we passed the little village of Al Qibeli (Al Jibeli or Al Jirba) which has a high tower in the centre and is surrounded by a strip of well-tilled fields in which burr was growing with rows of beans between. There were, of course, some 'ilb trees too. The siyāras had already told us that some of the people living here had been in Java and while we were taking photographs there came up to us two men followed by some boys who did in fact know Malay. An invitation to take a cup of coffee with them followed as a matter of course. We explained that we were in a hurry to reach the head of the 'aqaba and must therefore decline their kind invitation but that we should be glad for permission to climb the fortress-tower and enjoy the view from the roof. We might do so, they said, but the tower had been uninhabited and neglected for some time. Helping each other up we had to reach from outside the storey where the living-quarters were. From that floor an internal staircase led up to the flat roof. The people here were more friendly and trusting in their behaviour for we had now entered the "diyār Ingrams", the land where the truce reigned.

The Sheikh of Al Qibeli had just come back from a visit to Ingrams, the man who had brought peace to their country. Naturally they wanted to know about us: Why did we not fly? Why had we come from a rich land to look at so poor a one? Or were we really after minerals? This suspicion, which was strengthened by our interest in geological strata and

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fossils and by Hermann's map-making, we ridiculed: gold and oil in your country? Why, there is nothing here but stones and sand and poverty-stricken beduin! To this the Sheikh answered that no doubt nowadays Europe was foremost in wealth and development but that once Arabia had held the lead. I heartily agreed with him saying that that was the reason why we understood each other so well.

At Tamîn, near a hissu and under the familiar thin shade of acacia trees, we found consolation for the oppressive heat of the sun in the anticipation that this would be the last midday halt for a long time that we should make on the jöl. The track lay over flat and barren rock-fields with, twice, the surprise of a descent into a hollow where, surrounded by white blocks of limestone, lay a clear pool, a reminder of abundant past rains. These pools form drinking-places for the small cattle and not far away from them herd-girls are usually to be seen tending their shiny, black goats that graze scattered over a wide area. With the aid of the lady of our party we sometimes succeeded in getting these children of the wilderness to come close; sometimes we even managed to photograph them. The little girls wore the same pattern of skirt as their mothers and grandmothers only more elaborately and tastefully embroidered in red and green. Round their necks and waists they wore many silver chains and a whole bundle of big, thin, silver rings hung from a hole pierced not in the lobe but in the upper cartilage of the ear. Their small faces were daubed with yellow dye while on their foreheads, lips and cheeks and above all on their chins, all manner of designs were traced in indigo. The hair above the forehead was shaved at its base in such a way as to leave a well-greased fringe hanging over. The whole made a not unattractive picture though it did emphasize the fact that there is, among these people, more inclination to smear something on the skin than to remove something from it by washing. The customs of a country must, however, be honoured. A closer acquaintance with beduin women, which was soon to follow, put us in dread of their ideas of cleanliness.

In the afternoon we passed a hamlet on whose outskirts stood several unusually big stone piles: some square-shaped and composed of great blocks, others in the form of open rings of upright slabs. According to the villagers these heaps dated from ancient times. One of the men who came running up to us from his work in the fields was followed close at heel by a number of small sons with typical Javanese faces. Yes, he had been many years in Java, had married there, and had brought his sons back

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here with him to learn the language and grow up strong through the hard life of his native country. The boys had the gentle traits of their mother's people in voice and features but for the rest had become slim and wiry brown beduin. Their father was very insistent on our accepting his hospitality but we were unwilling to linger there and arranged that he should bring the goats he offered us to our camp where he should enjoy with us the banquet that was to be prepared that night. He could not understand why we preferred the discomfort of the jöl to his hospitable dwelling but nevertheless he fell in with our suggestion.

The boys told us that they had been born in Malang, that their mother was still living there, but that they had for the most part forgotten her language. We walked along together and, as we passed his house, this half-beduin, half-townsmen bemoaned the opportunity he had lost of entertaining us in a manner befitting our quality. Then he set off with his sons to fetch the promised goats. Two of the men of our caravan thought it better to go and help him, with the idea, no doubt, of making sure that he picked a pair of good, fat animals.

We had scarcely reached our camping-place when they came along with the goats. As was proper, the animals were knowingly handled by our men to judge of their fatness and the goodness of their meat and when they finally tore themselves away from contemplating the appetizing spectacle a spirit of brotherliness and co-operation had spread through the caravan such as had rarely been seen before. In the shortest possible time the caravan was unloaded and everybody disappeared to gather firewood. All joyfully joined forces to batter down and drag into camp whole knotty trunks of acacias. Soon two fires were burning high and there was feasting in our last camp at the gate of the Hadhramaut.

The goats were slaughtered and the joints distributed. There was roasting, frying and boiling and everyone took a hand in preparing the meal. Appetizing smells were borne on the wind to those of us who sat at a distance watching all the activity around the high, leaping flames. Everything was done quickly and in the most primitive manner. Hunger, after many meatless days, was to be the sauce that would give relish to the meal. Soon all voices fell silent, mouths were otherwise engaged. It was a short-lived but intense delight. The curved jambiyas were brought out towards the end of the meal. With them the clean-picked bones were hacked in two so that the marrow could be sucked out. The skulls were split open so that every cranny in which an edible morsel might lurk could

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be licked empty. The donor of the goats remained to share in the feast and spent the night in our bivouac.

The siyāras took leave of us here: their task was ended for they had brought us through the uncertain border-country into the territory of Ingrams' Peace. For Hermann and me this was a great occasion. Eight years before, not far from here in the Wadi 'Amd, we had begun our attempt to reach Aden overland. The Wadi 'Amd was at that time full of strife and danger. With a few trusty followers we had climbed the 'aqaba on the other side of the wadi to reach the jōl of the Deiyin beduin and as we climbed sharp-shooters had fired on us from the watch-towers. Ducking and running from boulder to boulder we had got past those parts of the path where the enemy could see us.¹

Now the siyāras were going back and we were on the point of descending into that wadi of whose dangers we retained such lively memories. At our request our new friend, the man who had given the two goats, went with us into the wadi. This was no imposition on him for down in the wadi he had another house and a wife and an unexpected visit might have its uses. It was reassuring to have someone with us who knew the way and could point out the dangerous places, and who, at need, could act as an intermediary when we renewed our contact with the people of the Wadi 'Amd whom we still did not wholly trust.

¹ See: *Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*, p. 207.

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

AFTER the farewell feast with which we ended our journey over Jebel Sōt the mood of the camp was excellent. A stomach filled to capacity with excellent food gives the true beduin a feeling of great well-being. At such a time he feels a desire to be reconciled with his fellows and to compose those petty quarrels that arise from the fatigue of travelling over the hot and endless rocky plateaux. The beduin leader came and sat in the circle of soldiers which we had also joined and combined his assurances of future good intentions with excuses for shortcomings past. At length, after much rallying, laughter was let loose and the democratic unity of the caravan became more assured. We had certainly much need of healthy solidarity, for the most difficult part of the journey with our Hammāmis was to come the very next day and after that we hoped to continue with them for a good many more days through the wadis of the Hadhramaut until we reached the palace of the friend of our first journey into the Hadhramaut, Seiyid Abu Bakr bin Sheikh Āl Kāf. No one in the caravan except Hermann and myself had yet seen the Hadhramaut. Most of them had not even heard the name until quite recently Ingrams had carried out his peace experiment and news of this great event in desert history had quickly spread from tribe to tribe and become the subject of talk whenever caravans met on the lonely desert tracks or camped alongside each other.

From us they heard another kind of story about the Hadhramaut. They knew not that the Hadhramis had been originally as poor as they themselves but that they had taken the risk of leaving their native wadi or jōl and faring overseas to the rich lands of Zanzibar, India and Java. Arriving poor, many of them had grown rich there, some very rich. With money they had earned abroad they built in their own Wadi Hadhramaut those palaces, mosques and summer-residences that have no equal in the whole of Arabia.

All were eager to see these things and on the morning of April 18th 1939, the business of striking camp went briskly forward. Great care

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

was now taken to see that no camel strayed far away and for once there was no quarrelling over the dividing of the loads.

After a good hour's travelling we reached the head of the 'Aqaba Bā Tēs. The camels, which on the plateau had walked with the head-rope of each tied to the tail of the one in front, were now loosed from each other. The loads were hitched tight once more and then camel after camel began the difficult descent. The tongues of the drivers shouting encouragement or warning to their beasts were not still for a moment. Where it was very steep the driver put on the brake by pulling on the camel's tail with all his might.

We went on ahead to look out over the Wadi 'Amd from the edge of the perpendicular cliff, for we had not yet seen the part that lies above the town of 'Amd, nor had this part yet been mapped. The rim of the wadi was still some way distant, for in building the 'aqaba advantage had naturally been taken of a small side valley in order to avoid part of the sheer wall of the wadi. From the gully rose the echoing clamour of the camel men. Luckily we could not see what trouble they were having and we hoped for the best. They and their animals had a great advantage over us in that they did not know what dizziness was and equally were without fear of precipices. We ourselves, guided by our Bā Tēs friend, cautiously approached the edge of a rock bastion jutting cape-like out into space. There we stood wrapt in contemplation of the splendid panorama that suddenly opened at our feet. Twelve, perhaps fifteen, hundred feet below us lay the bottom of that enormous cleft which cuts its way through the rocky plateaux northwards towards the still greater Wadi Hadhramaut.

It was like the empty bed of a very broad and deep river. Opposite us, but miles away, was the wall of the jōl of the Deiyin beduin. From where we stood we could just see the commencement of an endless plain, with vague and hazy coulisses in its flat-topped hills, exactly similar to the scenes we had looked upon for days on end on our own Jebel Sōt. We could not see the face of the cliff on which we were standing, but the opposite one stood before us sharply defined like a gigantic relief map. Bastion after bastion stood there with slopes of scree piled up against them, their broad bases on the wadi floor. Small side wadis had carved out these capes of rock from the thick limestone layer of the jōl. A section of the history of the earth's strata and their modifications stood revealed before us. In that immensity of naked earth we human beings were as

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

insignificant as grains of sand. How many centuries have passed over these wadis and their rock bastions!

From the beginning of human history men have lived in and migrated through these wadis. What traces have they left behind them? Seen from this height, none. "For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." The present inhabitants in their mud houses know nothing of the ancient civilized peoples. When they see the remains of earlier buildings and reservoirs they only shrug the shoulders contemptuously. Those? they were kuffār, unbelievers, heathens. For their sins God annihilated them by a great flood.

Down below, on the floor of the wadi, live the men of to-day who esteem themselves the chosen of God: the true believers who know the way to salvation and look down on us "Nasārā". They are ashamed to admit their descent from heathens even although those heathens possessed the civilization of the Sabæans. We broke the spell of wonder and speculation: the practical work of mapping this part of Wadi 'Amd had to be done. Hermann was eagerly looking forward to the moment when we should cross our route of 1931, for from then on we should be travelling through territory which he had already mapped. From where we now stood that spot was not to be seen, nor yet the little town of 'Amd which has given its name to the wadi and which we were the first Western travellers to enter and describe. But we could see a number of villages, collections of small, dust-coloured cubes grouped between the green band of fields and palm-groves and the wall of the wadi. Houses must not occupy land that can be cultivated: they stand on the dry slopes, exposed to the full glare of the sun, which has advantages from the point of view of hygiene.

Looked down on from so great a height the slopes of scree did not seem very steep, but later on, when we looked up at the villages from the scil-bed of the Wadi 'Amd, they appeared to be clinging precariously to the sharp inclines and we wondered whether there was not some danger of the scree rolling down and destroying them. That, indeed, does sometimes happen, but only rarely.

The pure, white ribbon of the scil-bed, a river of sand, wound through the wadi. Where the banks were broad and flat there was a strip of fertile fields and palm-groves. Although violent scils may periodically sweep away part of the banks, yet, from the height of the cliff can be seen how the sand-covered land is won back again and replanted with young date-palms.

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

The strip of vegetation that gives the wadi its refreshing look and its inhabitants their prosperity lay in many shades of green between the white river of sand and the brownish scree-slopes. No sound rose up to us from the depths and we could discern there no signs of life. It was all unreal and small as a toy. The heat, which was fierce down in the wadi where the wind of the jōl could not penetrate, kept the people inside the mud houses with their little window-openings or within the shade of the palms.

The caravan could easily have reached the bottom of the 'aqaba before Hermann had finished his taking of bearings and sketching. We, in the meantime, did our photographing and clambered about from rock to rock in order to see more and so fix more firmly in our minds this view of a typical Hadhrami wadi. Seen thus from above, nothing in that wadi appeared to have changed. Nevertheless we knew that a great change in its stagnant history was impending, a change that had already begun some years previously in the Hadhramaut proper. The West had broken through the defences of jōl and desert, had even been invited in by the Hadhramis themselves. Will it benefit them in the long run? We looked forward eagerly to what we should see there.

Eight years earlier we had seen modern weapons of the West, bought with the money of the East, making internecine wars more bloody and more protracted. We had seen the new buildings that the very rich had had copied from those they had seen in the countries that were the source of their wealth. That was the beginning of change. The native architecture, so practical, simple, strong and beautiful, seemed to be doomed. But something good had also come out of the West, something that had sent a whisper of hope through the surrounding deserts, and it bore the name of "Sulh Ingrams". Would it prove disappointing on closer contact? There lay the Wadi 'Amd: we would go and see for ourselves.

Accompanied only by our Bā Tēs companion and Muhsin we went down the 'Aqaba Bā Tēs which proved to be a good 1,300 feet. It was pure Hadhrami work. Necessity had in the end forced the people to combine: the skill for so daring a piece of work had always been there. But it had taken a war that involved the Bā Tēs tribe for years and cut them off from the jōl to bring them to the point of undertaking this great enterprise. They had to have communication with their hinterland, the Bā Tēs territory on the Jebel Sōt, in order to supply themselves with food and munitions. After years of effort they had succeeded, by combining

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

all their forces, in building this supply route up the practically vertical side of the wadi. It was the most daring 'aqaba that we had so far seen. With justifiable pride our Bā Tēs guide pointed out the difficulties that they had had to overcome. Almost all the way the path clings to steep cliffs and skirts deep gulfs. Parts of it had been hewn out of the sheer limestone face. In other places the path was carried on high piers of rock built against the side of the cliff. From time to time we descended rock staircases. In some parts the path zigzagged with hair-pin bends which were supported by towers of masonry leaning against the cliff with their bases on the top of the scree-slope. One such erection had once slipped and, together with the workmen on it, had crashed down below. After that the workmen used cement and raised the tower anew. The stories of our guide were so vivid that several times I had to sit down with my eyes averted from the precipice in order to shut out the picture of the builders hurtling down. Standing at the turns of the track we could look down to the floor of the wadi, hundreds of feet below, or else out along the dazzling white cliffs of limestone whose surfaces had been fretted century after century by sand-laden wind. The strata of the limestone had been exposed in bold horizontal lines and here and there great slabs stood in front of the cliff, still upright, but sooner or later to crumble and collapse on to the scree below. The section of rock that held one such isolated slab to the cliff-face had already been pierced and the wind was eating an ever widening hole into it. Down below, like small mice, stood the camels, unloaded, resting from their labours. Walking warily along the path which clung to the sheer cliff I could not bear to think of laden camels going step by step the same way down. At those sharp turns their long necks must have hung far out over the dizzy precipices.

It was three years before this great work was completed for the needs of agriculture left only a part of the year free for working on it and on an average no more than fifty competent men were available at a time. In money it cost very little. Fifty Maria Theresa dollars had been spent on blasting the rock in two places, a trick that one of the tribe had learnt abroad. The 'aqaba had been in existence now for about twenty years.

At the foot of the 'aqaba we saw again, and the others for the first time, the system of water-supply for travellers in the wadis of the Hadhramaut; that is to say the siqāyas which are small structures, about three feet square and five to seven feet high, covered with a domed roof brightly whitewashed like the mosques and tombs and the houses of the rich. Inside the siqāya

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

is fitted a shallow earthenware basin the rim of which touches the wall all round. In the wall above the basin is contrived a lattice or a few simple openings in one of which is kept a drinking-mug of wood, or frequently in these days, of tin. Through these openings in the walls the passing traveller dips the mug into the basin for water to quench his thirst. Assistance to travellers is enjoined upon Muslims as a religious duty and to this the *siqāyas* owe both their existence and their regular replenishment. It is a meritorious act to provide in one's last will and testament for the erection of a *siqāya* and its daily filling with water. Their existence is justified only in places where travellers regularly pass and since they have to be filled daily one finds them only in inhabited regions. The shining, white points that from afar one sees glinting beside the track are a great comfort to those who travel through the hot wadis.

Our descent of the 'aqaba was rounded off by the promised visit to the house of our Bā Tēs friend where his wadi-wife lived. It was in the village of Mckheiya. Passing through date-groves and fields bearing a fine crop of dhura we reached a water-channel which probably dated from ancient times. Near the channel, closely surrounded by the houses of the village, lay an oblong basin with smoothly-cemented, sloping sides. It was exactly the shape of a giant bath-tub. Always when found in conjunction with pre-Islamic ruins these cisterns have the shape of sloping-sided bath-tubs. Their origin must be Himyaritic for the present inhabitants no longer know how to make the admirable cement with which they are lined. The people of Mekheiya told us that in their district there were 300 cisterns of which only a few had been cleared of the sand and rubble that filled them. These basins are a clear indication of the standard of civilization reached by the wadi in the Himyaritic period. One disadvantage they have that now, when only filled by the seil, the water after standing a long time becomes green and slimy. There must, too, be a grave risk of malaria from them.

One of the stock questions one asks in a new district is about the wells. The people here had many, from twenty to fifty *qāmas* deep. A *qāma* is the distance between the tips of the middle finger of each hand when the arms are fully outstretched: *i.e.* about five and a half feet. Only one well was fifty *qāmas* deep. It was war, again, that had led to the digging of so many wells. Nearly every house had its own. Clearly the Wadi 'Amd had been no stranger to war!

Meanwhile we had arrived at the house of our Bā Tēs guide, a high,

The 'Aqaba Bā Tēs

mud-dwelling built on a comparatively small area. The square window-holes were so tiny that one could cover them by spreading out both hands. The rooms, too, in such a tower were not big but low and dark. The inside of this peasant dwelling was not at all attractive and memories of former experiences made us follow our guide dubiously. But our host assured us that the place was clean and declared that we must at least drink coffee with him and taste our first Hadhramaut dates in his house. They were last year's dates, pressed into a solid cake for keeping, reddish brown and full of stones. The cake had obviously not been handled with much cleanliness and did not look at all appetizing; but the acceptance of hospitality imposes obligations and when we had clawed off pieces with our finger-nails we found that they did not taste so bad.

The little room soon filled up with a noisy company of rustic neighbours who had come running in from their fields with the loam still on their hands. They had the loud, harsh voices of people who spend the whole day shouting to their camels at plough and water-wheel. Their screaming was tiring for it made the dialect, difficult enough to begin with, almost impossible to understand. They had so much to say that they overwhelmed us with questions, and complaints too, spitting the while with great force and accuracy past Frau von Wissmann through the narrow window-openings. An imploring look from our fellow-traveller forced us to intervene. They thought it a little odd, but from then on spat under the mat we were sitting on, briefly lifting the corner for the purpose. And another matter menaced our peace of mind. It was our travelling-companion again who first discovered that this peasant-dwelling harboured a host of vermin. They advanced in species too numerous to identify. There were small, red lice and small white ones and the familiar flat ones were not lacking. Very soon we were busy scratching and slaughtering, activities of which the company took no notice and which served in no way to interrupt the conversation. We were first taken for British and were expected to tell them what would happen when the three years' truce expired. They had heard that they would then have to pay taxes. That they would never do! Better risk death than that! I told them that I knew nothing about taxes: that was the business of the Hukūma in Aden and of Ingrams in Mukalla. But they stuck to the point.

I then said that it was impossible to have good government without paying for it and that in all countries of the world people paid for their government in taxes. I could not see why they too should not pay taxes

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if they wished to become a well-governed country. They surely had had by now enough experience of what war meant.

Frau von Wissmann had meanwhile escaped from the stuffy little room, the vermin and the clamorous tongues. Our host had noticed our scratching and was ashamed, too, of the rude manners of his neighbours. He could not send them away but had on the roof, he said, a small room that was clean. We accordingly retired to it. It was not clean but at last we were quiet and from the sun-baked roof we were able to take a number of photographs of Mekheiya, the village built on Himyaritic foundations.

Coffee was brought. The vermin were definitely fewer in number here. Our host complained about Arab women. The one who tenanted this house was getting on in years and he did not often cross her threshold. After coffee we were able to take leave of this man who led a double life: small trader, money-lender and industrious drudge of a town in Java and, at the same time, a beduin, who had left his heart on the jōl and in the wadi where the hard life of a peasant and herdsman of small cattle had brought him in the end the satisfaction of his cherished desires.

Our caravan waited in the shade of the date-palms until the hottest hours of the day were past and then went on once more, further into the wadi.

In the Wadi 'Amd

THE first afternoon of trekking through the wadi was not easy. True, it had been hot on the jōl during daytime but we had enjoyed a continuous breeze. Here we were enclosed in a wide, but deepish wadi where the heat floated above the ground in hazy waves and was reflected from the rocky walls. The soles of our feet began to ache and our eyes became tired and bloodshot from peering ceaselessly at the blue-white stones to spot a safe place for every step. Whenever we wanted to look round at the square mud-dwellings of the small villages on top of the scree we had to pause, balancing on top of the boulders. This happened often, for everything was new to us. The houses lack the architectural charm of those in the Wadi Jirdān but their simplicity and good proportions, the way in which they fit into the surrounding landscape and the setting of date-palms, which latter are absent from the Wadi Jirdān, lent a particular charm to the Wadi 'Amd.

We soon saw that it would be possible to reach the little town of 'Amd before sunset. The memory of the night and day which Hermann and I had passed there eight years before was a bitter one. The people who might then have helped us on our way treated us, Nasrānis, basely and were either not willing or lacked the courage to lead us safely through the surrounding war zone. In the end they gave us a black slave as a guide. Vexed by such treatment we had left 'Amd in the afternoon and made for the 'aqaba that leads to the jōl of the Deiyin beduin. From distant watch-towers snipers, shooting at us with their Mausers as we climbed, forced us to run for cover from rock to rock before we reached the protected part of the 'aqaba. That had been our farewell to the Wadi 'Amd eight years before.

For this reason we tried to avoid contact with the town of 'Amd and decided to camp under the opposite, northern, wadi wall. To be in the open, away from the complications which 'Amd might bring, gave us a feeling of freedom and repose. No sooner had we finished our camping arrangements than an old woman approached us seeking help for her two

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grandchildren. She told us a story typical of the Hadhramaut of those days. The people of 'Amd had signed the peace-treaty but had committed acts of aggression and the Hukūma had insisted upon the delivery of hostages so as to prevent any future breaches of trust. The representatives of the Mukalla Government here were members of the Bā Surra family, sons of the former energetic governor of the Wadi Du'ān. They seem to have had a hard job with the recalcitrant people of the Wadi 'Amd. As hostages two orphan children were seized and sent for detention to the castle of the Governors of Du'ān. What could an old granny do against that? Although we tried to explain that we had nothing to do with the Hukūma she did not believe us, nor did she suffer herself to be sent away before we had recorded the facts and promised that we would talk about it with Ingrams himself. Hostages are taken in South Arabia as an important and common way of maintaining order. When one thinks of the poor devils dragging, in exile, their heavy, clanging foot-shackles, one becomes convinced that with the extension of British influence this cruel practice will have to disappear. But when the weak and defenceless are chosen as hostages then this abomination becomes as loathsome as the evil of war it is intended to prevent.

We had many more disturbances in our first bivouac in the Wadi 'Amd than on the jōl. Although the seil-bed of the wadi was wide, it was quite obvious that a good many people lived at a very short distance. Inquisitive ones came over to have a look, others to claim that we were camping on their ground and must pay. We did not agree to payment but bought their goodwill by procuring camel-fodder from them. The camels were not allowed to rove about as they might break into the gardens and cultivated fields close to our bivouac. With one knee bent and bound they lay down in a circle around the dhura-straw we had bought for fodder. It was an advantage to have them close at hand so that in the early morning we should not lose time in recovering those that had strayed far away.

Thus next morning we were early on the move. We succeeded in avoiding the town of 'Amd which was still hidden in morning mist when we skirted it at a safe distance. Thus also we evaded the obligation of paying a visit to the local authorities. On the opposite wadi-wall we recognized the 'aqaba that had been our way out of the wadi on our first trip. Outwardly nothing seemed to have changed, yet the wadi was totally different. Now men were walking about without rifles and

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unprotected women and children were working quietly in the well-cultivated fields. They did not run away when they noticed us but came up for a friendly talk. And when they saw us picking up the ripe dōm fruits that had fallen from the trees and lay on the ground they insisted on our sharing their own stock. The fine loess fields were well ploughed. A week or so before an abundant scil had come down the wadi and here and there, in deep places, water was still lying. Most of the fields had recently been sown or were covered with a velvet of young dhura.

We halted for the midday rest at Sarāwa in the shade of a big 'ilb tree. Many people came from the village to greet us and to collect news at the same time. They were very friendly. Would that be only because they were convinced of some connexion between us and Ingrams? As some of them had been in Java the conversation was continued in Malay which gave it a more familiar note. Later on good drinking-water and fuel was brought to us from the village and when afterwards we went through Sarāwa itself the inhabitants crowded eagerly round us trying to show off by some odd words their knowledge of the Malay language.

Some of the siqāyas we came to were empty, thanks, possibly, to the work which was in full swing in the fields. More likely it was because the recent rains had left all along the path in the scil-bed small pools that offered an abundance of sweet water to the thirsty traveller. In some places there were little springs in the wadi-wall where the limestone strata rest upon sandstone. We recognized the springs from a distance by the primitive conduits, plastered with lime, that carry off the trickle of water to an adjacent basin. From afar they appeared as winding streaks of shining white. During the afternoon our progress was slow. The path lay over round stones, sometimes through dry irrigation canals at the foot of the wadi-wall and past many hamlets where our caravan attracted an inquisitive crowd that entirely blocked the narrow streets. In the village of Shamikh we watered the camels and filled our water-bags from two large Himyaritic tanks. One was long and narrow, one hundred and twenty feet by sixteen and had the traditional bath-tub shape. It contained water for washing. The other contained drinking water and measured sixty by thirty feet. The many villagers who were busy washing or drawing water and others who had come to look on formed a gay and talkative crowd.

During the whole afternoon we trekked through a wide, cultivated strip of land which was so completely pacified that we could go right across

In the Wadi 'Amd

the wadi, without even our guides, and photograph the villages of Jedfera, Khanfar as Sēla, Al Masāni' and Qarn al Māl, that were then glowing in the sunlight. A deadly silence reigned in these villages. Only the crowing of a cock and the barking of a dog were to be heard as the inhabitants were all out working in the fields. Not even a guard was left to protect the village. Nobody shouted at us or tried to stop us, only the more inquisitive ones came running up and with a cordial handshake asked the usual whence, whither and why. When there were Java-Hadhramis among them they accompanied us for some little distance talking and asking questions. The children stood shyly by.

According to the people there this wadi must be full of Himyaritic remains. They pointed out some on the tops of hills that are in a favourable strategic position and are most probably ruins of fortresses. They also showed the remains of the wars of their own days. Towers, walls, trenches, all have their share in the story of internecine battles fought not long ago. Our attention was particularly drawn to some long trenches. At great pains these had been dug at night time so as to approach villages it was desired to conquer or to establish a safe means of passage between village and gardens. Suddenly all this had become useless. The former ingenuity and tenacity of attacking other people now seemed fantastic nonsense at which the narrators laughed as one laughs at a menacing dream when one is awake.

On the extreme edge of the villages we saw something new—underground store-rooms for cattle-fodder and cellars dug in the mounds of scree and fitted with wooden doors. Within is stored dhura-straw, the so-called *qasab*. In the thickly-populated and partly-cultivated wadi animals cannot be let loose to find their own food, so provision has to be made for them.

In spite of many pressing invitations from Java-Hadhramis to stay overnight in their houses, we trekked on in the darkness to find an uninhabited part of the wadi where we could camp in the open. It would probably be our last camp for several weeks to come. We were approaching Hureidha where many old friends were living. Afterwards, when in the Wadi Hadhramaut itself, we would go from town to town. There we should find rich friends in whose beautiful houses we would stay the night. And that has a charm of its own.

Opposite Husn Jellannes, in the darkness, we pitched our camp. A very sick man on a donkey, accompanied by his healthier brothers, had followed

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our caravan. He was suffering badly from asthma and we lacked the medical knowledge to help him. But it gave him satisfaction to hear from us that Allah's ways with mankind are good and that we may resign ourselves to Him. For these people this is not a lightly spoken word that no longer offers consolation. "Islam," which means "submission to Allah", represents to them a reality that answers many questions. In the night the sick man on the donkey, his tall brothers walking beside him, went back to his village, perhaps a little comforted, holding tightly the bottle of physic we had given him.

Everybody here knew of Ingrams, of his activity and his plans. What we had witnessed to-day, the contrast between the Wadi 'Amd of eight years before and of the present, made us envy the man to whom this task had been entrusted. From some of his compatriots as well as from foreigners there had been criticism that the pacification of the Hadhramaut was not achieved without bloodshed. Later on we hoped to discuss with Ingrams himself this side of the picture. For myself I am convinced that the R.A.F. with its "warning bombs" and with a few real ones has accomplished a work of peace. The war-lords were compelled to realize that an end was being put to their reign of misery, that their innings which had lasted much too long had come irrevocably to a finish. Now the whole country that had so long awaited the "Sulh Ingrams" was reviving and would never again wish to exchange it for the old liberty which in fact had been an inhuman bondage.

Now we saw in the Wadi 'Amd peasants who had left at home their useless rifles and women and children who walked about care-free and happy on paths that used to be abandoned or who worked in fields that were formerly desolate. Houses that once could not be approached without announcing oneself and asking permission to proceed and that often proved to be full of armed men, mostly sick to death of the whole proceeding, were now empty. A people at liberty was freely extending fields and date-groves.

The caravan trekked on and arrived at Hureidha at noon on April 19th. For us this meant that we should again be with our good and old friends, the Seiyid family Āl 'Attās. Only that morning we had sent a messenger to announce our arrival. Before they could have a chance of making elaborate preparations for our reception we should be with them.

The lower part of the Wadi 'Amd, that is to say close to its convergence with the Wadi Hadhramaut, is sparsely cultivated. The caravan needed

In the Wadi 'Amd

no spurring to keep up a good pace for, though some of our party were not acquainted with the goal for the day, they had heard enough of the wonders of Hadhramaut and of the hospitality and generosity of the Seiyids (or Sāda to give the correct Arabic plural) to make them hurry on impatiently.

Eight years before, quite close to Hureidha, the town of the Sāda, we had met war and insecurity and much remained to remind us of those days. The farm-houses were strongholds from which one could look out far over the surrounding country and which could be defended against warring neighbours. These high tower-dwellings, placed in a row along the wadi wall, are very impressive and the village Al Musawwar is a good Hadhrami specimen. Here and there people were busy drawing water from newly-dug wells for the newer date-plantations. The barrenness of the land recalled to us the time of war. In those days people had been able to continue living here, keeping their properties intact, thanks only to money sent from Java. On our former trip we had found an empty country-side, whose inhabitants were prisoners in their own dwellings: now they were walking about without rifles and without the urge to take to their heels at the approach of strangers.

The layers of loess are considerable here and this part of the Wadi 'Amd could be quickly improved with financial help from outside. Progress might however be impeded by the absence abroad of many men, especially the more energetic ones. When they return home after years away they are spoilt for agricultural labour. But they never lose the characteristic Hadhrami desire to build a house of their own, on a plot of their own, in their own native land. The nearer we came to the territory influenced by Java and Malaya, the more we saw of native skill in building construction and of the vagaries of taste that debase their architecture.

Jebel Zahrān, the high, rocky eminence that marks the corner of the Wadi 'Amd and the Wadi Hadhramaut, loomed in the distance. At its foot on the east side, a Java-Hadhrami had built a farm-fortress for his large family and its retinue of servants. A flat rock in front of the scree-wall was chosen for the site and on its high and wide top the house had been built. Terraces had been made on which the slaves and the free-servants set up their small dwellings and leaning against, and built into, the rock were stalls for the cattle. Tunnels had been cut in the rock below the house for storing fodder. High walls protected the terraces and the solid entrance-gate lay in direct line of fire of the many shot-holes made in the walls of

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the house. If the days of war should unhappily return then this Hadhrami could ensure the safety of his people and his goods. He would shut his gates, man his walls and then live cut off from the outside world but independent as a king in his castle. Thus he had dreamt as a child and thus, thanks to the money he had earned in Java, he was able to realize his dream. And he has been faithful to the traditional style of living of his forbears.

The next house we passed was already Westernized. It had high windows that admit light and fresh air but afford no protection against heat—and bullets. We now were on the outskirts of Hureidha, the little town so deeply influenced by Java, where eight years previously von Wissman and I had had a procession to welcome us as the first visitors from the West.



. A goat in the lower Wadi Jirdān.



38. *Climbing out of the Wadi Jirdān towards the 'Aqaba Kan*



1. Ar-Rödha with tilled fields and Pappel trees.



40. *Beduin and a member of the caravan on the plateau of Jebel ?*



11. A peasant girl collecting harmal ("Rhazya stricta") near Hureidha.



2. *A rock-pool on the jōl of Jebel Sōt south of Temūn, with acacia and 'ilb trees.*
3. *The hidden pool of At-Tawīla in the Wadi Farai with acacia trees and trunkless palms.*



44. *The village pond and a shallow wadi draining to Wadi `Amd seen from a tower at Al Qib*
 45. *A shepherdess on the jöl near Tamîn.*



46. *Looking north-east into Wadi 'Amid from
the edge of the jöl near 'Aqaba Bā 'Tīs*



47. *Euphorbia*: in the lowland near ash-Shihr.

48. A "Dragon's Blood Tree" in the Mukalla district.



49. Looking south-east up the Wadi 'Amd across to the wall of the jōl of the Dciyin beduin. Mekheiya in the foreground stands opposite the village of esh-Sherqi.



50. Down the 'Aqaba Bā 'Tēs : limestone rocks are isolated by erosion from the main eocene limestone precipice.



51. Mekkhiya, in the Wadi 'Amd, at the foot of the 'Aqaba Bā Tēs. A pre-Islamic water basin in the foreground.



52. *A village in the highly cultivated Wadi 'Amd, near Mekheiya, seen from the seil-bed.*



53. Hurcidha and the Wadi 'Amd seen from the house of Āl 'Attās.



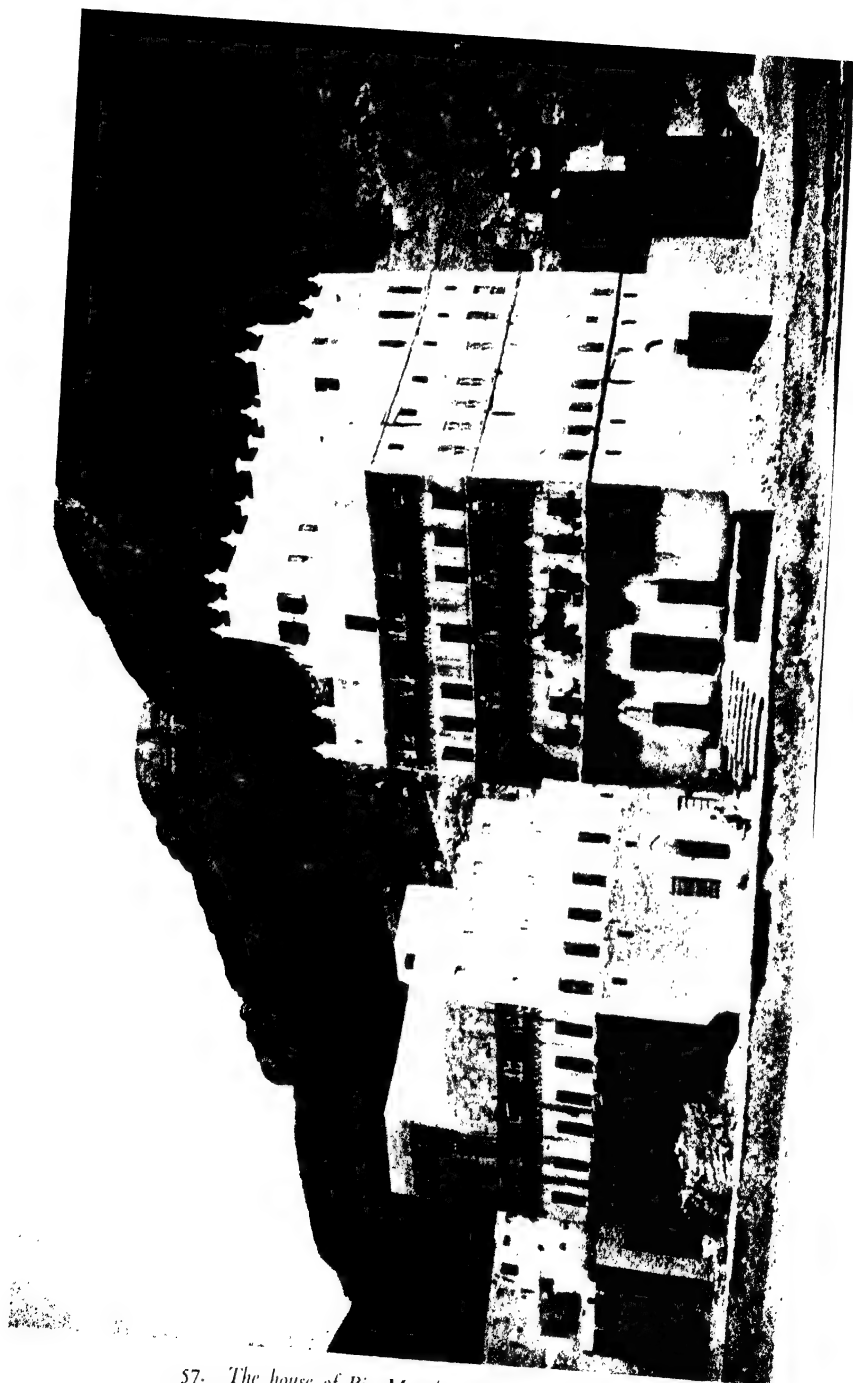
54. *The sons of Āl 'Attās by the swimming pool of Al Bahr.*



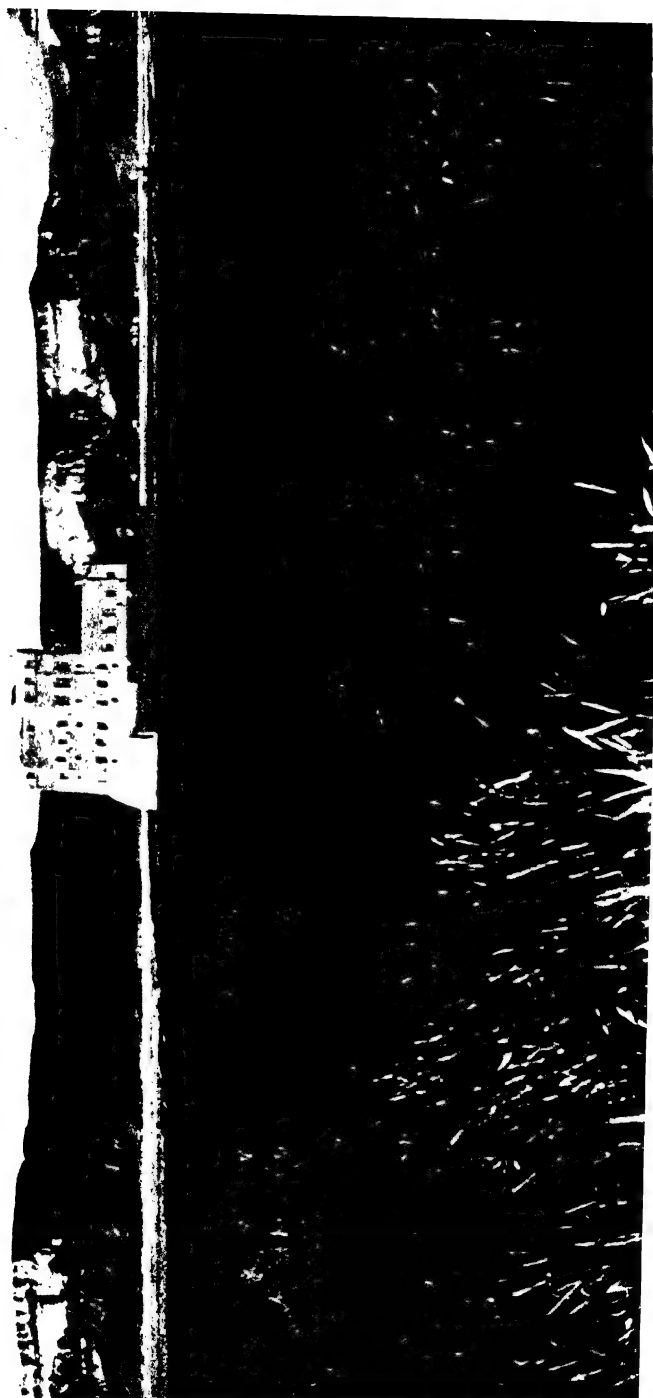
55. *The ravine of Al Bahr south-east of Hureidha.*



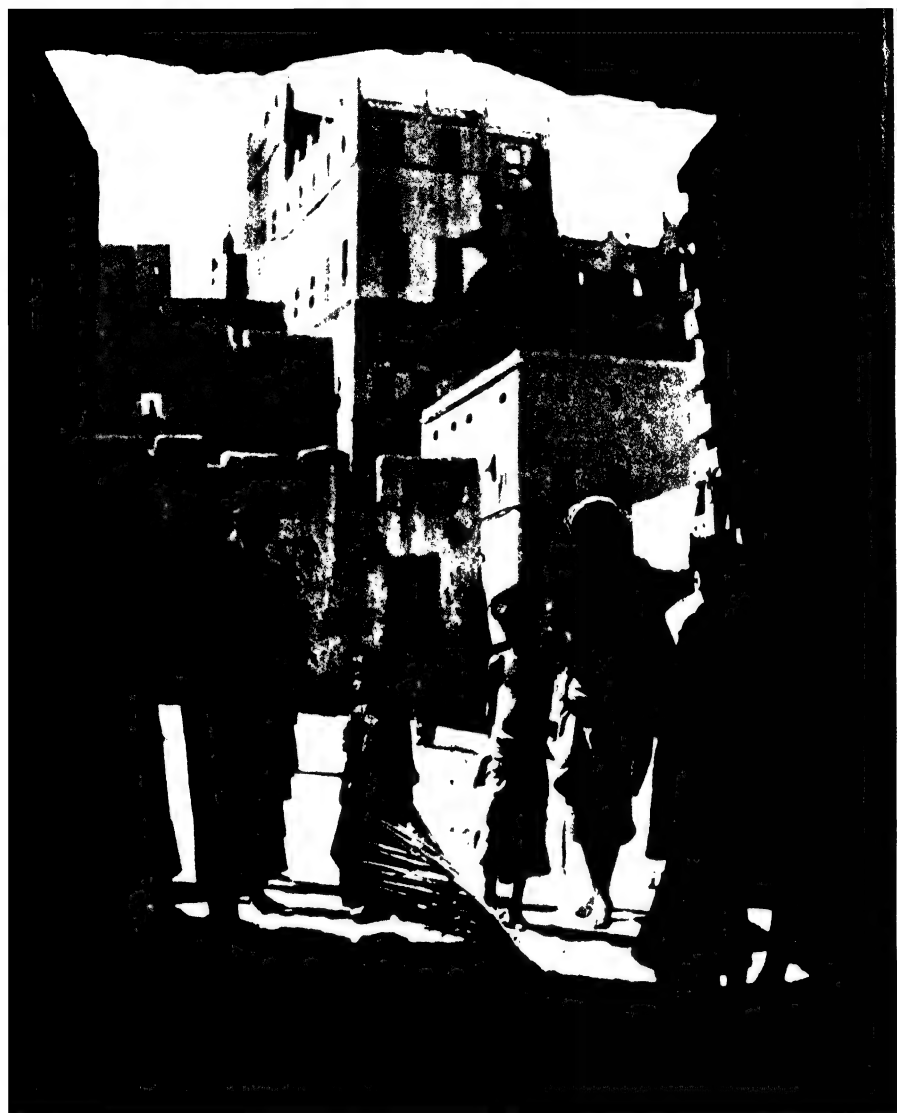
56. The pool of Al Bahr, in eocene limestone, suitable for bathing at all times of the year.



57. The house of Bin Marta' in Henin, at the foot of Jebel Qamrān.



58. *A wheat-field near Al Qam.*







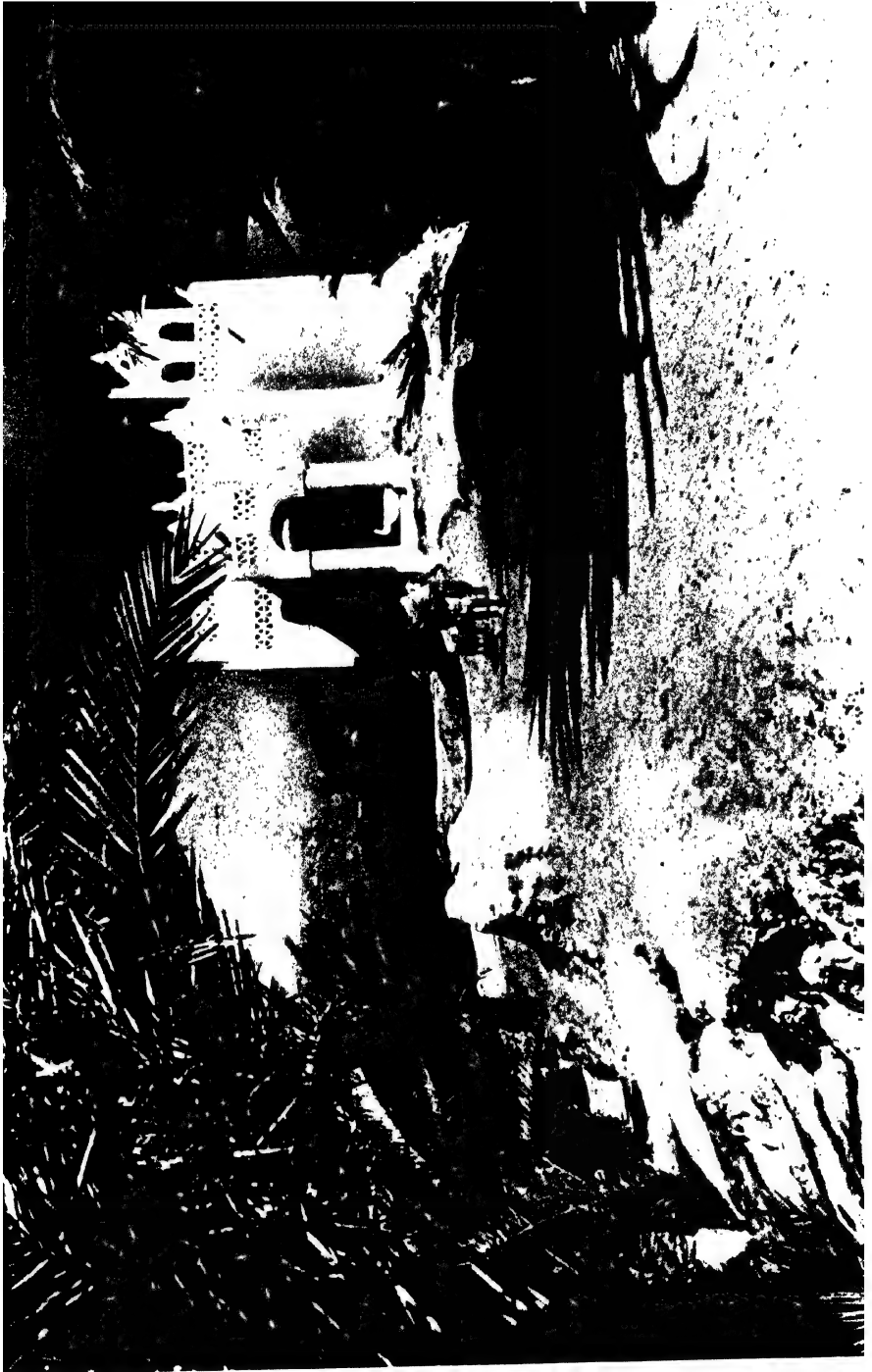
61. *The palace of ex-Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh, Al Qatifa.*



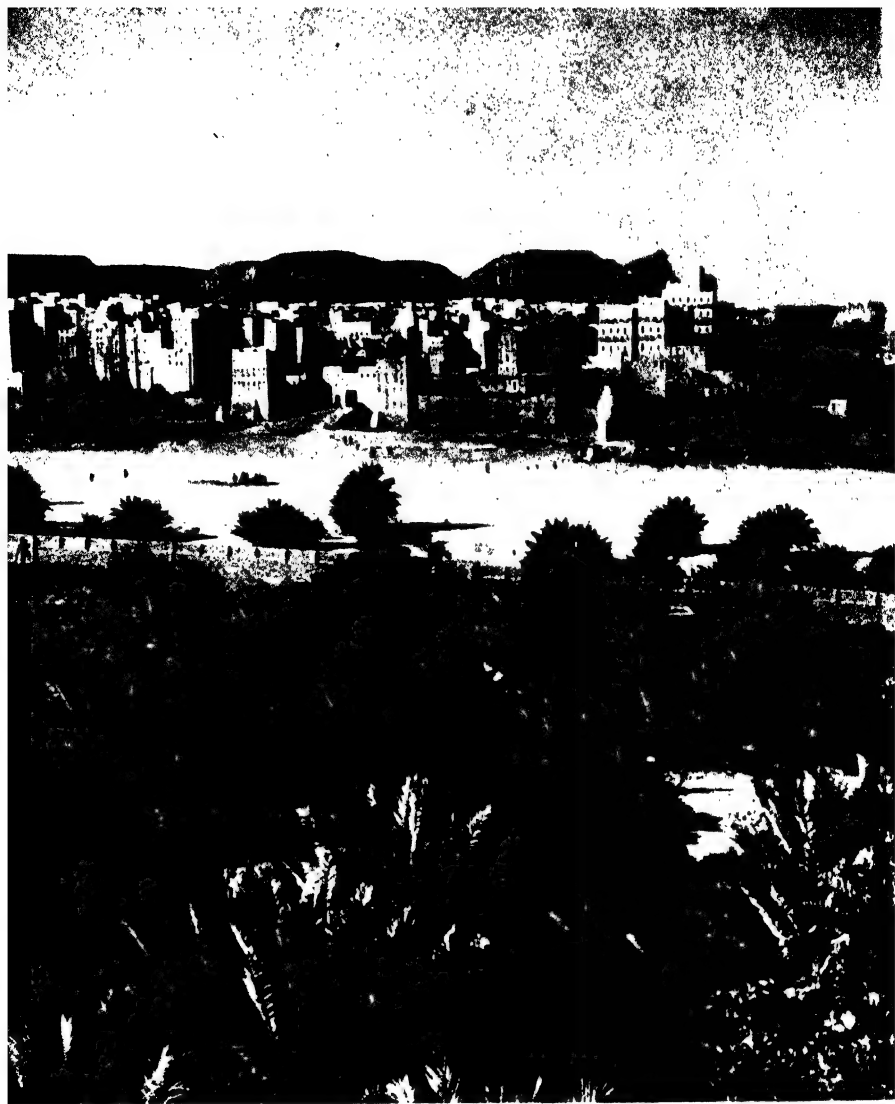
62. Tombs outside Al Qatn.

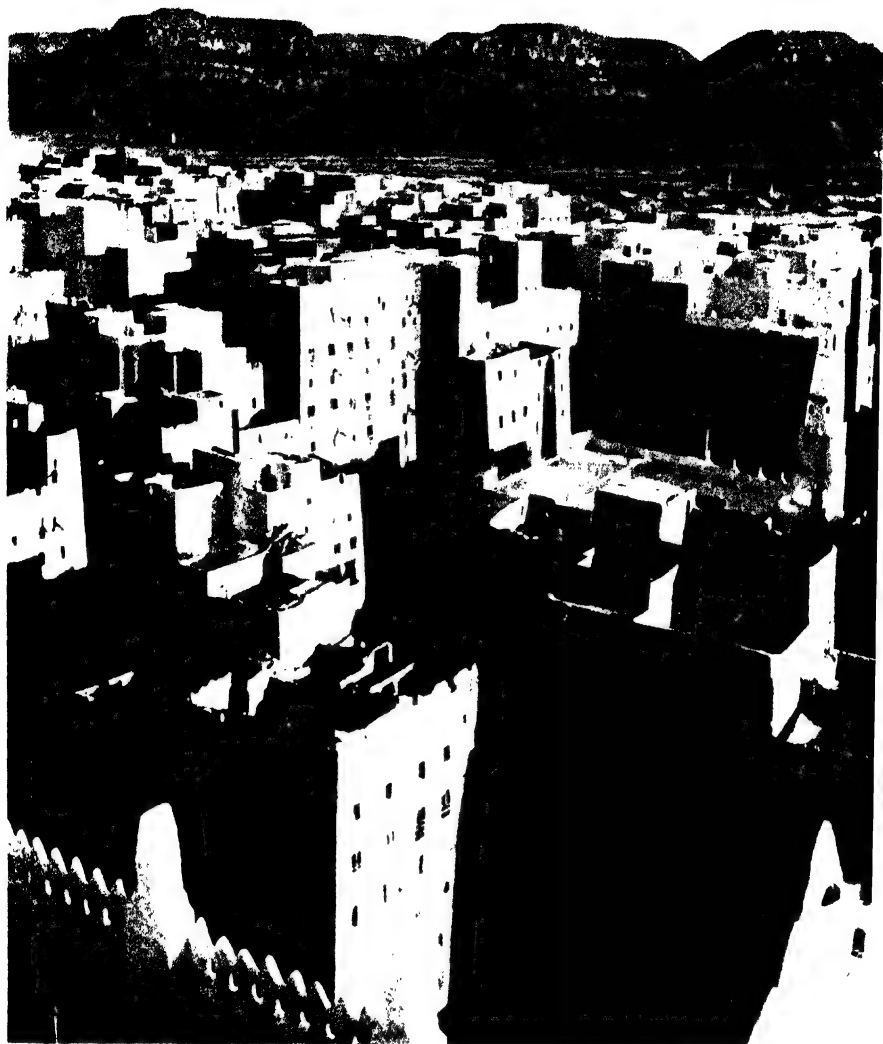


63. *Shibām : the oldest and most characteristic town of the Hadhramaut.*

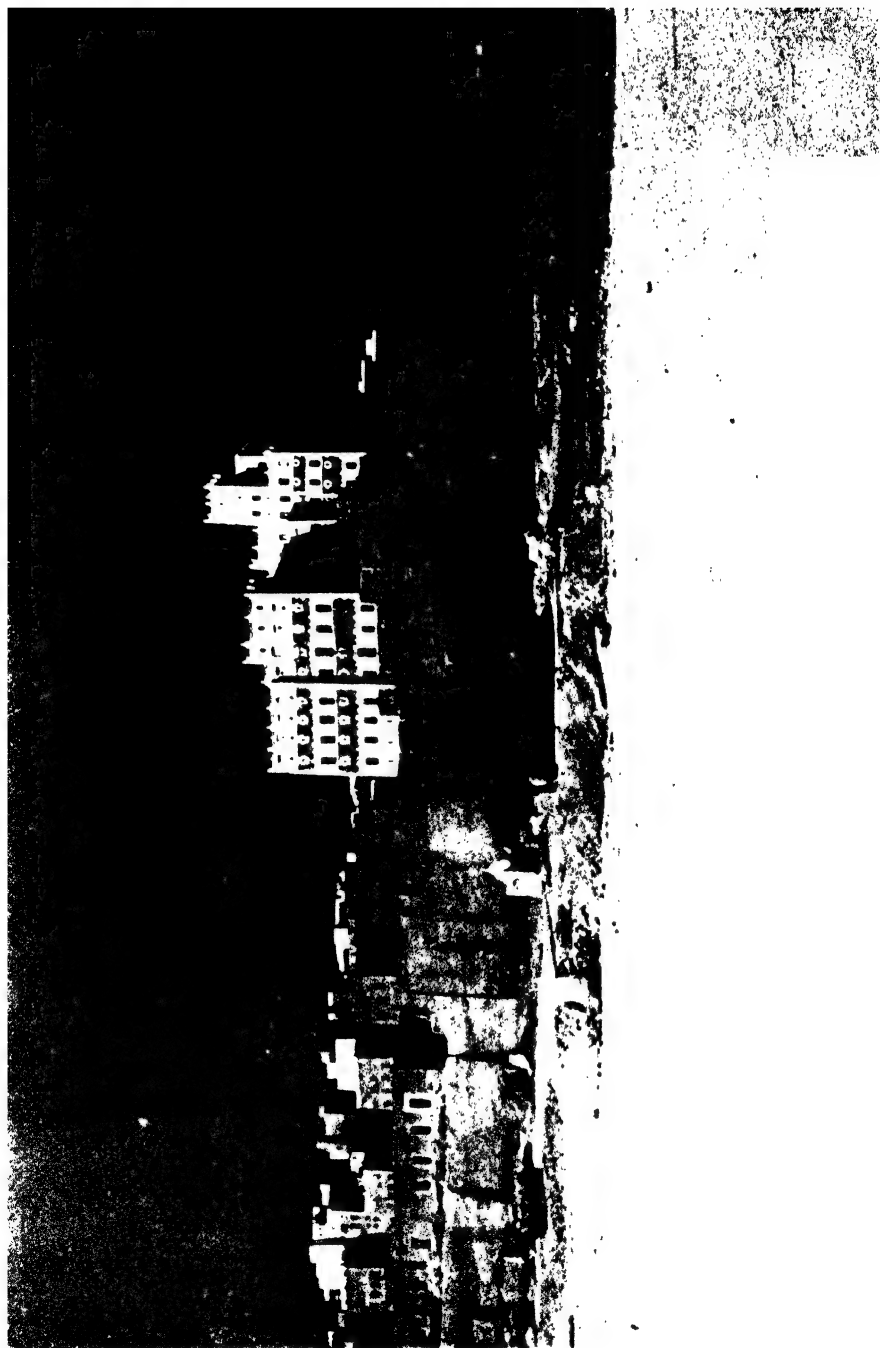


64. *Date gardens on the western approach to Shibām.*

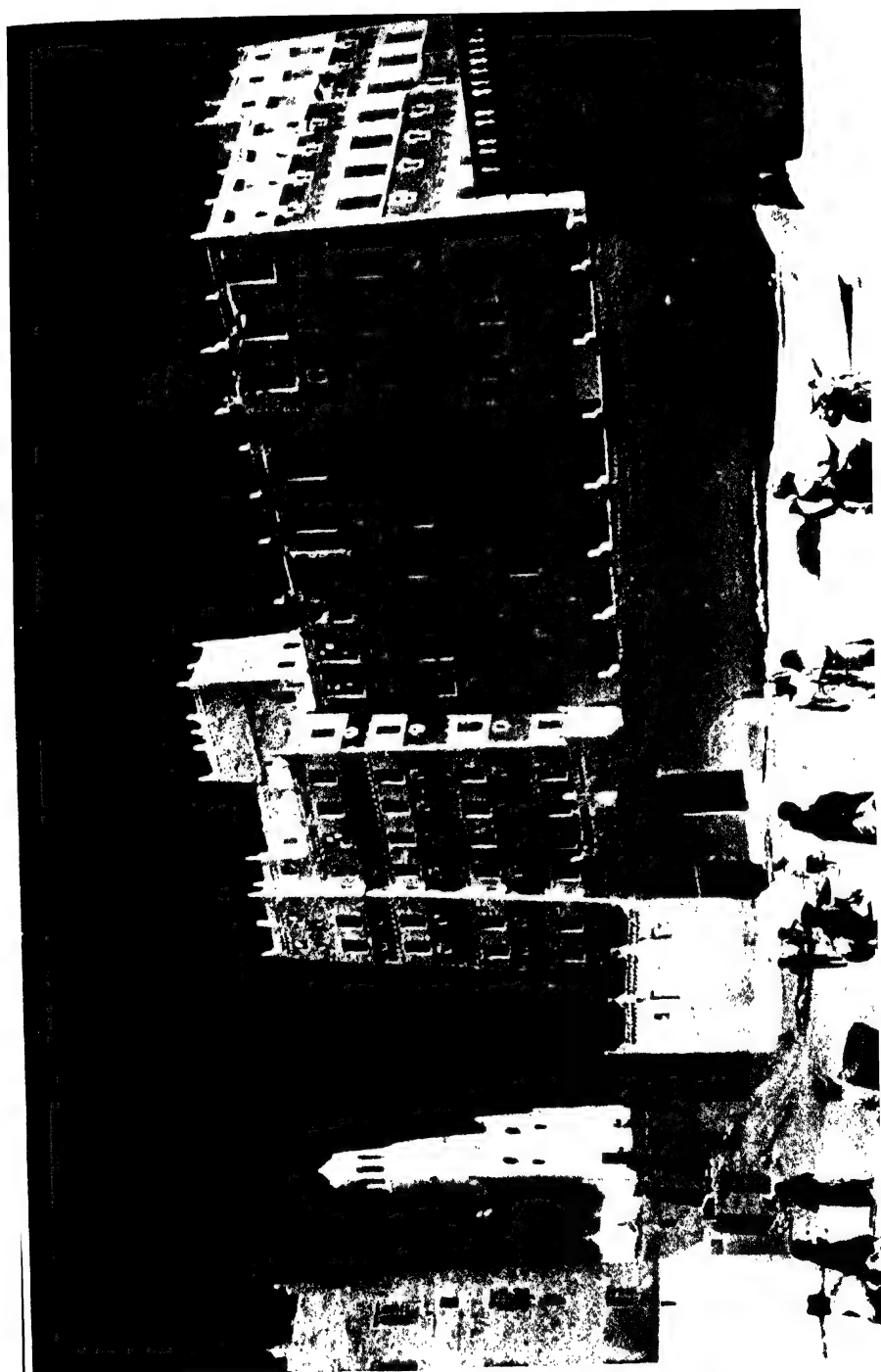




66. *Shibām at sunrise.*



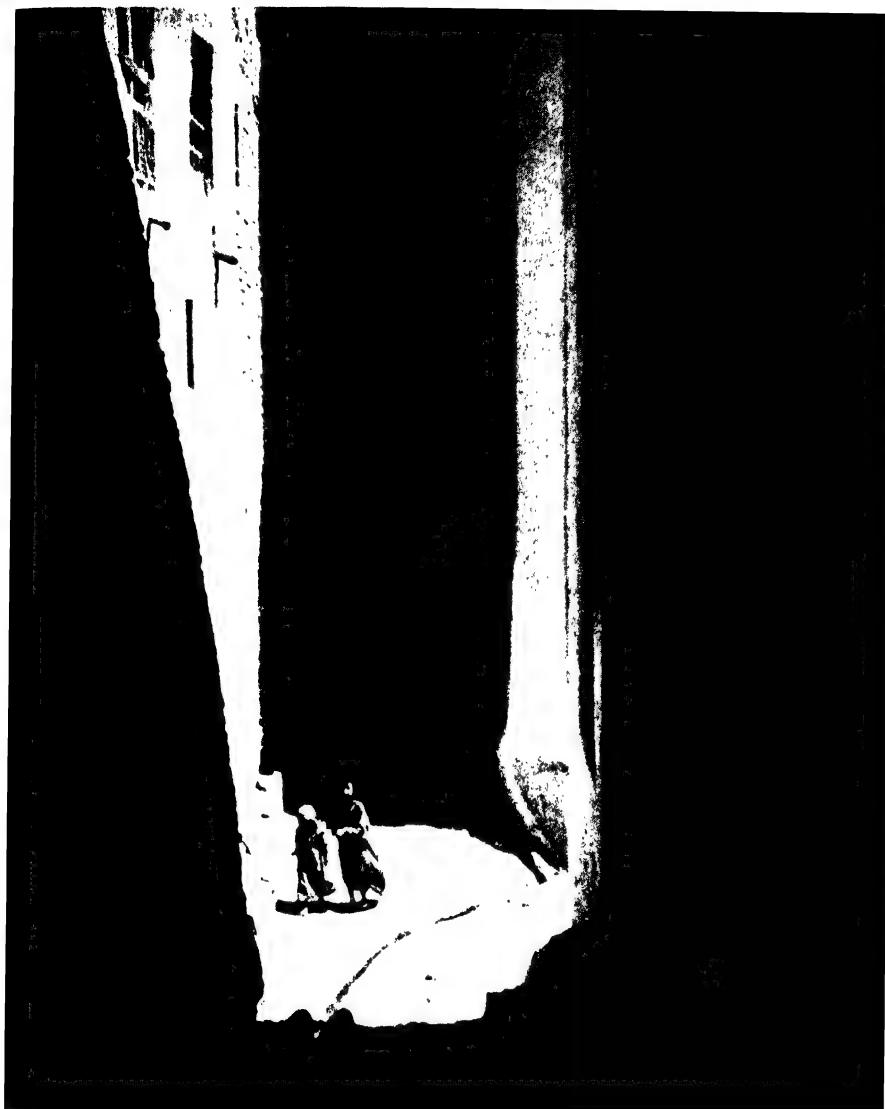
67. *The Sultan's palace at Shibām.*



68. *Shibām : the palace of Sultan Salih 'Al Qa'iti dominates the whole town.*



69. *Detail of façade of the Sultan's palace : Shibān.*



10. *One of Shibām's narrow streets.*



71. *The palace of the Sultan of Saivūr*

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OUR plan of entering the town without ceremony and of establishing contact at once with our old friends the Āl 'Attās in their ancestral homes succeeded. News of our approach had only just reached them. Seiyid Hāmid Āl 'Attās came running from his date-garden in his working-clothes. His uncle, Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin Ahmad Āl 'Attās, the head of the family in Hureidha, awaited us at home. Seiyid 'Ali bin Ahmad bin Hasan Āl 'Attās and Seiyid 'Abdullah bin Hārūn bin Husein Āl 'Attās came and joined Seiyid Hāmid. Seiyid 'Ali is a son of the famous Seiyid Ahmad who died a good twenty years before and was a man of much influence throughout the whole Hadhramaut. Seiyid Hāmid was a friend of our former visit. He had not strayed from the family seat but had spent all his energy in building houses and extending gardens. Seiyid 'Abdullah bin Hārūn bin Husein Āl 'Attās was head of the school that is maintained by the 'Attās family out of the income derived from some houses in Batavia specifically bought for that purpose. It is a modern school with a wide curriculum. Seiyid Hāmid Āl 'Attās gives lessons in arithmetic and drawing and uses school books from Java.

Hand in hand with these Seiyids we entered Hureidha. Much had changed there. Large houses had been built, partly, alas, in a debased style that included Western imitations. The central mosque, which in 1931 was not finished, had now been completed and was painted in bright colours and bore long inscriptions. We much preferred the old-fashioned pure Hadhrami style of mosque with its simple round, tapering minaret and its weathered white walls against which rare rain-squalls had beaten and the dusty desert wind had ceaselessly blown, giving it a creamy-brown colour.

The mosques were our landmarks in this little town where much had been demolished but so much more had been built that we scarcely recognized the place. New mosques had been added too. Some, as a variation from the customary truncated cone, had square minarets but retained the old open-work bands formed by placing tiles in a continuous series of

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upright and inverted isosceles triangles. The walls of the mosques and often the tops of the minarets were surmounted by a sort of stepped crenelation. They had been built by architects who knew how to graft new ideas safely on to old plans and had preserved the traditional Hadhrami simplicity and feeling for good proportions.

Silence reigned in Hureidha. The only sound to be heard was the song of the drawers of water in the white structures built over the wells. The question of water-supply is a considerable problem for the town and the drawing of water from the deep wells continues the whole day long.

The family mansion of the Āl 'Attās stands at a little distance outside the town. As an impressive background it has the crumbling wadi-wall and it is surrounded by some of the huge boulders that had come tumbling down. In recent years a wing had been added to the front but for the rest it remained unchanged, an unpretentious family centre where for the past eight years practically every traveller in the Hadhramaut had had a kind reception and enjoyed hospitality, where they had rested from their fatigue and advice had been given for their further exploration of the country. From this house adventure-loving sons had joined travellers and largely contributed to the success of many a journey.

Seiyid Muhammad, the same who had welcomed us in 1931, was standing in front of the house to greet us. His delighted surprise at this reunion told us that we were welcome here, though our party was much larger now than at our first meeting. For the soldiers and the men of the caravan there was a handshake and a word of welcome too and all were invited to the spacious majlis or reception room, where rugs covered the floor and the clean, white walls and ceiling drew from us a sigh of relief. We took off our shoes at the door and sat round the walls where clean cushions invited us to undisturbed relaxation. The soldiers and the men of the caravan stared in awe at such brightness of light and colour. Respectfully they kissed the hand of every Seiyid present and then were taken to another room where they would have food and feel freer and at ease.

The male part of the family sat down with us and, continually, newcomers came and joined us. I brought greetings from relatives in Java and Egypt. There was much to be told and many common recollections to be enjoyed. The cordiality we found here was so natural and spontaneous that it created a feeling of home-coming after a long and tiring journey.

We were asked to tell of our experiences between Aden and here and

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great interest was shown in our future plans. Arrival at the Āl 'Attās house meant for us that the first and most difficult part of our journey had been completed. Here we were in the Hadhramaut, in a land of friends and of civilization. From now on we should travel from one familiar house to another. We hoped to meet again many old acquaintances. We would submit our opinions and gathered impressions to their criticism and ask their advice for the rest of our journey.

Hureidha meant much to us. We had come here thanks to the encouragement of Seiyid 'Alawi Āl 'Attās; we had met here his energetic brother Seiyid Hasan; we had established bonds of friendship with Seiyid 'Ali Āl 'Attās, the daring adventurer who had become our companion on difficult excursions; and all three of them later served as guides to Freya Stark and the Ingrams on pioneer trips that opened up the Hadhramaut and have considerably enriched the literature about it.

Seiyid Muhammad expressed in the name of his family their gratitude for the book we had written on the Hadhramaut and for Hermann's map, both of which they had received after our first trip. The sons who could read English had told their elders of the contents of the book. The latter were of the opinion that the Seiyid class had been helped by our book in its struggle to maintain those class prerogatives which were the subject of bitter attacks by youthful, democratic non-Seiyid Hadhramis. These echoed the attack that is being carried out abroad in the countries of Hadhrami emigration where the young democrats feel safe under the protection of Western Governments. In Java the struggle was a severe one and the non-Seiyids with their organization "al Irshād" were very active. My answer was that although I wrote the book without political intent I had to expose the weaknesses and antiquated ideals of the Sāda.

Our book had had unexpected consequences for our friends in Hureidha. For several of the travellers who came after us it was a guide to the hospitable Āl 'Attās house. Some of them had lived there for months on end. We were assured that this result was a good one and much appreciated. Thanks to her stay in Hureidha a friendship had sprung up between our hosts and Freya Stark who lived with them for several months. Archæologists and geologists had found in Hureidha a centre at which they could do work that may prove of the greatest importance to the Hadhramaut. Ingrams had looked them up several times and Mrs. Ingrams, generally known as "Doreen", had made frequent and long visits and was a most welcome

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guest. The contacts made with all these people had provided a delightful stimulus to the quiet life of Hureidha.

We were asked of course whether we found the country much changed. We answered, with conviction, in the affirmative. The whole of the Wadi 'Amd had remained in our memory as an empty country with forbidding, high houses and a distrustful people who ended by sending rifle-shots after us. Now, however, we found an atmosphere of peace and activity, of cheerfulness and friendly confidence and last, but not least, a new agricultural effort with its promise of increased prosperity.

Boy servants sitting in a corner of the majlis behind the shining samovar produced endless glasses of tea for the refreshment of the tired and thirsty travellers. Golden-brown Java tea, which is an ideal drink in such circumstances and is poured on a lump of sugar in small, slender glasses, is the national beverage of the modern Hadhramaut.

Meanwhile in another room a table-cloth had been spread over the rugs on the floor and dishes arranged on it. We were invited to a meal in which Hadhrami and Javanese dishes were placed, brotherlike, alongside each other. How we enjoyed the refinement and variety of such food after the staple Arab fare where quantity and solidity are the predominant factors.

As our thirst had not been entirely quenched large drinking bowls of porous earthenware were passed from hand to hand at frequent intervals. These bowls are put in the window frames where the draught of air evaporates the water that percolates through the sides of the vessel thus cooling its contents. What could be more delightful than to hold such a bowl with both hands and to suck in through protruding lips, as through a spout, the apparently undiminishing supply of cool, refreshing water?

Hureidha lies within radio-reach of world news. Once a week a blue-covered, school copy-book arrived containing a record of world history for the previous week as heard on wireless sets in Saiwūn. These circulating booklets attracted much interest and the many who read them were well informed of the troubled happenings of the world outside.

After the meal we were free to retire to our rooms, to wash off the dirt of many days of travel and put on clean clothes. The trials of camping and the constant preoccupation with luggage and preparations for the next day's trek were forgotten. We were happy to leave all arrangements in

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the hands of our hosts and think only of small excursions and pleasant talks with people who would tell us about the town and its history.

We could see, during our frequent walks, that the cultivated strip near the town was being enlarged. Many young date-gardens and corn-fields had been planted, enclosed between mud-dykes, and connected by conduits with the flood-bed of the wadi. From the top of the steep wadi-walls a complete view could be had of town and gardens and we were credibly informed that seven thousand young palms had recently been planted and many shoots sent to Henin to enlarge the gardens there. But water was, and always will be, the great problem and without the money that came from Java their neglected agriculture could not have been restored so quickly nor could it survive.

The wells of Hureidha are forty to fifty qāmas deep, that is nearly three hundred feet. It was well worth-while to watch the slaves hauling up the bags of water, singing monotonously as they did so. Their hauling seemed never to end and the heap of rope grew and grew until at last the bucket with its precious burden appeared at the rim of the well. Up-stream the Wadi 'Amd has an even lower water-level. The village of 'Aneq is famed for having the deepest well, one of 120 qāmas, which is more than 600 feet deep. This astonishing piece of information at first found us incredulous, but in several places where we spoke of the wells it was confirmed. Who were the men who had the ability and courage to dig such wells? Some groups of well-diggers will work on a well for more than a year and their services are in demand in very distant places. The leader who actually works down the well earns one Maria Theresa dollar a day. Around the mouth of the well stand his assistants to haul up the excavated material. They get half a Maria Theresa dollar a day. In order to proceed one qāma in depth in very hard soil a group may have to work eight to ten days. These facts show the seriousness of the water problem.

In a hamlet not far from Hureidha we had the good fortune to see some well-diggers at work. They had reached the water-level two days before, after a year of digging! One of the group gave us a piece of looking-glass and showed us how to project the sunlight down the deep shaft. There we saw the tiny figure of the well-digger stooping over his work. He was at a depth of nearly forty-five qāmas and that is much if one gauges it with a small shaft of light.

For our first evening the roof terrace of the Āl 'Attās house was full of

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guests: old acquaintances mixed with enquiring relations, all eager to hear something about the outside world and some anxious to talk about themselves. The samovar had been moved to the roof and worked at full speed. Seiyid Muhammad bin Sālim bin Muhammad Āl 'Attās, who styles himself on his visiting-card "*As Sāih al Hadhrami*", the Hadhrami traveller, told us of his adventures. For us, however, Hureidha in the sunset was more attractive and beautiful than any traveller's tales and over the empty square, with its white mosque and minaret that had been erected by the Āl 'Attās family, we looked out to the date-groves beyond. The deeply-carved rock-walls were glowing purple and red and then turned dark-grey. That little town of Hureidha with its three or four thousand souls was being kept alive by her sons in far-distant lands who did not forget her but loved her poor, waterless existence because of the serene beauty of such evenings as this.

At least as many Hureidha citizens live in foreign countries as in the home-town. In Batavia alone, according to their information, about seven hundred members of the 'Attās family must be living. Hureidha's ten mosques are monuments of the piety of the far-scattered sons of this hidden corner of the Hadhramaut. Most of her fifteen wells came into being thanks to money from Java. The struggle for the deeply-hidden water would have been abandoned long since had it not been for the affectionate devotion of her sons abroad. For this same reason the poorest inhabitant of Hureidha can prostrate himself on an Italian marble floor in the central mosque and his children can get a school education which, by giving far more than local conditions require, creates the longing as well as the capacity for life and work in the rich, new countries that are so far away.

When the tales of the "*Sāih al Hadhrami*" were finished the people on the roof gradually brought out those questions which are deep-down in their minds and hearts. The Jewish problem in Palestine was of first importance. We met their one-sided, prejudiced opinions with some Zionist arguments and at the same time mentioned some British difficulties and mistakes. The second question concerned the struggle that was going on in Java in the matter of Seiyid prerogatives in public life. This is a thorny problem in which no modern Western Government wishing to maintain a neutral attitude in religious controversy and at the same time to support democratic precept can be expected to interfere. The only pointer we could give was that the Seiyids would safeguard their position in foreign

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countries if they were found in the front line of political and economic activity and no longer bemoaned the past or clung to traditions which a modern world did not respect. If, in the living, changing world of to-day, they made good use of the many chances that still present themselves in the Moslem Far East they might yet procure a leading place for themselves there and now.

Naturally the discussions then turned to their rapidly-changing homeland and to Ingrams and his collaborators. The misery of war here had come to an end some time before and a growing critical attitude towards the encroaching power of the British was already visible. Those who had formerly stood aside inactive were jealous now. In particular a group of young men who had studied or worked in Egypt and had come in touch there with nationalistic, anti-British sentiment began to express their half-baked ideas. If ever a piece of work wrought by the British could be defended by a Dutchman it was here and by us. Was it not we who eight years ago had transmitted to the authorities in Aden an urgent request for intervention on behalf of the Sultans and Sāda of the Hadhramaut?

To the young men in all the places where we heard their complaints we said that their own leaders had applied for assistance from outside because they could not themselves put an end to the internecine warfare. They had been right in regarding those wars as suicidal for their sorely-trying country. It was a pity they had been unable to establish law and order themselves in their small, impoverished land, they who disposed of money from abroad and had experienced the benefits of a strong and honest administration. That had been their shortcoming and their shame. But once the decision had been taken to seek outside assistance they could not have chosen better than address themselves to the British. In their secluded country, far away from world trade routes, nothing was to be found that might arouse the greed of world powers. Only two foreign Governments had contacts with the Hadhramaut that went far back into their history. They were Great Britain and the Netherlands. Neither of those two powers had ever got anything from this country but poor, though industrious and, in their fashion, able traders. There seemed to be little prospect of a reversal of roles. The Hadhramaut would continue to be the party in need of assistance. The Netherlands East Indies and the British colonial territories only asked from immigrants loyal conduct in the state of their adoption and such they had got up to now. Although comparatively

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few in number the Hadhramis played an important part in the economic life of the countries they went to live in but while they enjoyed to the full the advantages of those countries they never forgot their own native land. This position would not change now that the Hadhramaut was not only in name but also in reality a British Protectorate. We urged the young men of Hadhramaut not to lose sight of these facts. Co-operation and unity were required instead of criticism. Then they might learn how to govern their country, how to establish and keep order in the wadis and among the beduin on the jöls, how to repair irrigation works and to make this land of sand, rock and hunger a place where civilized people could live.

The 'Attās family had been among the earliest supporters of our Government in Java and on the roof of their hospitable house in Hureidha such discussions found a sympathetic atmosphere. Again and again elsewhere in the Hadhramaut these topics were brought up for discussion and then a more vigorous language was used on both sides. Nearly always, however, the lack of political training of the Hadhramis was evident. The struggle to satisfy the corporal needs of life, to overcome hunger and misery, to ensure personal safety during constant menaces to the peace, to attempt, occasionally, a little trade and, above all, to assure a safe eternal destiny: these were the goals of the Hadhrami's endeavour. For these he would willingly work day and night in a foreign land. If he succeeded in making money he would go home, back to the land of eternal sunshine. He would build a fine white mosque to assure his peace with the Allah he had often forgotten in the battle for personal gain. Close to the mosque would be a large and beautiful house, the dream of his life.

This selfish and limited aim is gradually changing, thanks to the beginning of a political awakening. In the Āl 'Attās house Young Hadhramaut showed signs of a mental stirring. They were filled with unrest but had as yet made no start in building up the new Hadhramaut. Only a few of the older Seiyids had already applied themselves to that task. Seiyid Abu Bakr bin Sheikh Āl Kāf of Saiwūn was helping Ingrams and these two men were bearing nearly all the responsibility for future planning and the full weight of putting it into execution.

It was in a peaceful mood that later we sat down for the evening meal. Hands dug together into the high pyramid of steaming rice boiled in goat's fat. Black peppercorns shone in the white mass. The well-cooked goats-meat was easily divided with the fingers and our opponents in the dispute offered us the best bits.

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The next morning Hermann and Wasi climbed up on to the plateau overlooking Hureidha to make a general survey of the surroundings and to take bearings. I went to pay some visits but had first to look at a house under construction for a younger member of the Attās family. A big, many-storied house was being built for the small sum of three thousand rupees. The cost of building was very low in those days, even for Hureidha. One could buy a thousand adobe bricks for seven or eight Maria Theresa dollars, for seven or eight more the bricks could be built into a ground storey and its higher ones for ten Maria Theresa dollars. The necessary wood came little by little from gardens and wadis. The wood that had been collected for this house was all 'ilb, short and twisted but strong and durable. Woodwork is restricted to a minimum.

We then went to Seiyid 'Ali bin Ahmad Āl 'Attās, son of the famous Seiyid peacemaker of the days of war. His fame derived from having made Hureidha at that time a centre of peace amidst warring beduin tribes. He cultivated relations with neighbouring Arab chiefs while supporting the Āl Qa'eiti dynasty and extending and strengthening its influence. His life was a proof of what a Seiyid can accomplish thanks to his descent from the Prophet and to the authority of a saintly life and leadership without arms. Obviously there were not enough of these Judges or perhaps they were pushed aside by force of arms. Locally, however, the system was successful and traces of it remain all over the country, but it was not widespread enough to stem the general deterioration in order and public security.

Throughout the Hadhramaut there exist religious feasts which are typically Arabic in character and although pre-Islamic in origin were Islamised and retained as valuable social institutions. They could only be maintained if periods of peace preceded and followed the celebrations so that participants could reach the holy spot concerned safely and return again to their homes unharmed. Connected with these feasts were yearly markets, processions and pilgrimages to the tombs of Saints. These celebrations brought periodical interruptions in the state of war and in the sieges and it was thanks to these breaks that the most urgent work in the fields could be done and trade carried on. The detrimental side of these providential truces was that they permitted the extension of wars and sieges for years on end. There was alleviation in the methods of war but the fighting was indefinitely prolonged. What was meant for a blessing became a curse.

The most famous centre of pilgrimage in the Hadhramaut is the tomb

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of the Prophet Hūd which lies at the far end of the Wadi Hadhramaut where it changes its name to the Wadi Masīla. On the way there one passes the town of 'Ināt which has at least seven Saints' tombs honouring the memory of holy Seiyids. In the same way Hureidha has under her spiritual care Al Meshhed situated at a few hours' distance in the Wadi al Kasr. Al Meshhed contains the tombs of famous members of the 'Attās family and a yearly visit (ziyāra) is made there by some of the Seiyids to a half-religious, half-mundane ceremony that attracts thousands of beduin. It, too, is an important yearly market. The Seiyids try to use this opportunity for religious instruction and for the promotion of peace. The efforts of Seiyid Ahmad Āl 'Attās and other members of the family may have contributed towards Islamising the still half-animistic beduin tribes and softening their rough manners but the conversion is scarcely complete. Seiyid Ahmad's son told me that he still sat twice a week to settle disputes that were brought before him. Backed only by his spiritual authority he could not bring his people to accept complete inviolability of person and property. To accomplish this the power of the British had to be invoked. But in a society that is no longer in constant fear of war and where the conditions of living for the beduin are better assured Seiyids of the standing of our host will doubtless still be able to perform useful work.

In the afternoon, accompanied by a bunch of bright Āl 'Attās boys, we went to Al Bahr, the lake, a deep pool filled with crystal-clear water half-way up the rock wall to the south-east of Hureidha. Eight years before we had taken the same walk and now we were amazed at the many changes that had come over the land that had then been silent and empty. Several new houses had been built, wells had been sunk and date-groves extended. A peasant came towards us walking behind a donkey that was loaded with clusters of unripe dates. He explained that he had sometimes to thin out some of the fruit so that the remainder might grow bigger. Unripe dates are good cattle fodder and the soil here is so rich that some trees began to yield fruit only two years after planting.

We passed a mud-tower that had been a pivotal point during the last war that had been fought in this wadi. The boys proudly told us that they had been to look and had seen and heard the two opposing parties firing at each other.

Al Bahr was unchanged. Rain water gathering on the jōl must have rushed down the face of the rock wall and scoured out this deep hole that

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can only be reached from the wadi side. On the other sides it is enclosed by steep, perpendicular rock. The sun touches the surface for only a short time so that the water does not evaporate much and the whole year round the pool offers an ideal spot for picnics and bathing parties for the few who have the energy to undertake the long five mile walk and the steep climb half-way up the rock wall. Frogs and tiny fishes live in the pool of which none of us could touch the bottom by diving.

When we returned home in the evening we saw in front of the Āl 'Attās house a motor-car surrounded by a group of inquisitive people. It was a friend of our first Hadhramaut trip, 'Awadh bin Marta', from the village of Henin who now again gave us surprising proof of his helpfulness. Hearing of our unexpected arrival he had stepped into his car and come to Hureidha offering to take us first to his own place and then on to our next halt.

Eight years before he had caused a great sensation by driving into Hureidha to offer us the luxury of transport by car. He had been the first to drive a car as far as this. The population had been most deeply impressed and came running out of the town to stare at the low-voiced monster that slowly approached the town working its way through the deep sand. Even the women had appeared and climbing on to the flat roofs had given us an opportunity of seeing more than is a man's due. It was amidst the rejoicing of the town and cries of amazement from the roof-tops that 'Awadh bin Marta' had ridden into Hureidha. Since that time a track for motor-cars had been marked out in the sand and hills and for a Hadhrami driver the trip was no longer difficult.

Bin Marta' had been an energetic and enterprising tradesman in Surabaya. He had but recently returned to his native land and he was, as we were, much impressed by the changes that had taken place during his eight years' absence. He had had many opportunities of peeping behind the scenes and was full of questions and criticism. Hours of talking with him began in Hureidha and were later continued in Henin, the village he saved from the destruction of drifting sands and drought.

The car could take only three of us. So Wasi went on with the caravan and its escort straight to Shibām and Saiwūn where we should all meet again in a few days' time.

We left the Āl 'Attās house next morning, much refreshed, and carried with us the memory of a friendship that surpassed the traditional Arab hospitality. Here was manifest gratitude and the customary bond that

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unites Hadhramis with men of the Netherlands East Indies' administration. Thanks to this relationship the road to their second fatherland is kept open wide. The bounties of Java gave Hureidha her chance, lifted her out of poverty and decay to the rank of a prosperous oasis. She became the point of contact between Hadhramis and those foreigners who wish this land well, who disclosed its beauties and conveyed its needs to the world outside and who like to bring here the good things of the West although they know that many evils will slip in too.

Hureidha had fulfilled a task. It will depend on the rising Āl 'Attrās generation whether they will lead the new Hadhramaut through the many dangers that confront it. Hureidha is an entrance-gate and must stand both watchful over the treasures of the past and alert for the great possibilities of the future.

Back in the Hadhramaut

DRIVING through the narrow streets, past some handsome mosques, we reached the outskirts of Hureidha. There the people were busy mixing chopped, dried grass with water and loam for the construction of a house. These dried mud-bricks, here called *libn*, are ideal building-material for dry, hot countries. Hureidha still builds in the traditional manner, possibly still uses age-old plans but prudently admits ideas brought in from abroad. There is not much hope for the survival of pure Hadhrami architecture.

A great cemetery stands in front of the town containing a number of white *qubbas* commemorating Seiyids whose lives were an example and a blessing. Beyond these, we set our course on a towering landmark, the rock of Jebel Ghumdān. Here we were back in the broadening bed of the Wadi 'Amd which we followed until it joins the Wadi al Kasr. This wadi runs due North and finally debauches into the wide plain of sand-dunes and loam-hills that takes the name of Wadi Hadhramaut as it turns north-east. As soon as we had reached the Wadi al Kasr we turned to look at the distant eastern wall where, with difficulty, we were able to distinguish the outlines of the village of Haura.

The term Hadhramaut, as now used, comprises three distinct regions: the coastal strip with the ports of Mukalla and Ash Shihr, the jōl and the Wadi Hadhramaut proper with its attendant wadis. It is divided into two sultanates which in turn have their own more or less independent beduin tribal chiefs and their men-in-authority in the villages and towns. The Āl Qa'citi Sultan, who resides in Mukalla, administers the coastal territory, the adjacent jōls and the greater part of the Hadhramaut proper. The Kathīri State lies like an island within the surrounding Qa'citi territory. Saiwūn and Tarīm are the chief towns of the Kathīri island. The chief Qa'citi town of the Wadi Hadhramaut is Shibām with Al Qatn and Haura next in importance. Haura in the Wadi al 'Ain is an administrative centre. Haura had to stand many an attack from Kathīri bands in days of old and that is why she has an ancient, much-besieged castle. In that castle was centred the authority exercised in the name of the petty Sultan of Shibām

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by a muqaddam or a sheikh. As the territories of both sultanates are now inviolable under British protection they have no further need for defences and can devote all their attention to the urgent tasks of local administration.

Haura is built at the foot of the wadi wall and is separated by a wide, sandy seil-bed from the plain through which we had come motoring. When we reached the seil-bed we left the car and continued on foot. 'Ilb trees were growing and in the shade of the trees Mr. Figgis, the assistant of Ingrams, had set up his tents. At the moment of our arrival he was in the castle in the middle of discussions with quarrelling tribal chiefs. We climbed up to the castle and noticed in passing that a more prosperous belt of date-gardens must formerly have stretched in front of the village. The castle has been neglected but still presents a giant front of stern and massive beauty.

For days on end Figgis and Seiyid Abu Bakr bin Sheikh Āl Kāf had been negotiating; patiently establishing security and laying the foundations of peace and future prosperity. After endless stairs we were brought to a crowded hall. There was Abu Bakr! It was an unforgettable experience to meet again the man who on our first trip had given us his friendship and his unsparing assistance. Much had passed over that grave head during the eight years since we said farewell to him in Tarīm. He and his family and friends, together with the weak, local, petty sultans, had been driven away from the town. From Tarīm, the town that had been rebuilt by him and his family, that had acquired fame as the centre of the hopes of Young Hadhramaut, the town of religious study and many mosques, the spiritual capital of the Hadhramaut, rebellious slave-troops had driven them away to live in Saiwūn.

That catastrophe convinced the Government in Aden that intervention could no longer be postponed. After a difficult period of transition Seiyid Abu Bakr became the natural leader of the new Hadhramaut. This was not by his own wish. He himself would have preferred to continue dedicating his life to works of charity: to the founding of schools, the relief of the indigent poor, the introduction into the country of Western medical help and the construction of the first motor road between the coast and Tarīm. All this activity, undertaken in obedience to the will of Allah, had resulted in his emergence into the centre of the political stage and made him the man most trusted and honoured by the whole Hadhramaut. He was their trustee to assist Great Britain in her endeavour to raise the country from sloth and ignorance. Ingrams soon discovered Abu Bakr and

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recognized his gifts of heart and intellect. A great friendship grew up between them.

Seiyid Abu Bakr had become thinner. His swarthy face with its surly mask was lined and sorrow-wrinkled. Though he would dearly like to retire from political life he knows he cannot do so, at least not yet. On the slightest signal of danger he is at hand and thanks to his co-operation the work progresses. His self-imposed task is impoverishing him, for with generous hand he spends from his own pocket if by so doing he can help on the work of reform. That pocket has been filled less regularly in latter years when, under the stress of economic crises, the revenues from the family possessions in Singapore and Java declined.

Our greeting was reserved because of the crowd of onlookers and short because of the arrival of Figgis. He shone like a candle in a naughty world. He occasioned us some surprise for his top-half was British and the rest pure Hadhrami. His fair, bright face shone above a shirt so dazzlingly white that the eyes of everyone were drawn towards it. The shirt disappeared in a red-checked sarong that was fastened round the waist by a broad green belt with leather pockets of a type very popular in Java. Underneath appeared two legs covered with heavy woollen stockings as a protection against vermin. We faced each other not quite at ease and attempted to disguise our astonishment. "Tea, breakfast, or a bath?" he kindly offered us. As we made no answer he decided for us: "I imagine you would like a bath first." His intentions were of the best but we burst out laughing and asked, conscious of the contrast we made with this impeccably clean Britisher: "Do we look so dirty?" Then we realized why we had been so attracted by that clean silk shirt. It belonged to a world different from that we had been living in. In little more than a month how far we had sunk below its standard! A burst of laughter soon broke the ice and before long we were sitting together around glasses of hot tea, busy, for our part, trying to inspire the representative of Ingrams with some confidence in our plans. Why, we asked, did Ingrams inform London of his objection to our travelling in certain unspecified parts of the Hadhramaut? Figgis did not seem to be very conversant with the point at issue and replied without much conviction. He emphasized the risk of danger in remote places. We replied that this contingency had been met by the declaration we had signed in Aden. When, however, Figgis learnt that our aspirations did not lie in the direction of Shabwa, but were limited to a crossing of the territory between the Wadi Hadhramaut and

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the southern border of the Rub' al Khāli, he was reassured and after a consultation with Seiyid Abu Bakr who roundly promised his assistance, he was won over to our side.

Conversation then turned to the task of Ingrams in the building up of a new Hadhramaut and the great responsibilities it called upon him to shoulder. When we took leave of Figgis we felt convinced that the gulf of distrust between us had sensibly narrowed.

Seiyid Abu Bakr said that he hoped to see us in his guest-house at Saiwūn some days later and that he wanted to talk over many things. It was good that Bin Marta' was with us and could listen to our conversation for his opinion on the recent happenings in his homeland was as yet unsettled.

We walked back to the car crossing again the hot, sandy seil-bed. Then we drove through a belt of sand-dunes and low hills to the other side of the wide wadi where Henin lies at the junction of the Wadi Henin with the Wadi Hadhramaut.

In the middle of the sea of sand stood a group of exceptionally high houses—the diyār Āl Būqri—where eight years ago we found men who were surrounded by war and talked with them of real man's work: that of waging war. Their last date-palm had then just perished from drought. Money from abroad had made it possible for them to carry on their war which had already lasted several years. Their words were still proud though they were actually prisoners in their rich houses. Only at night-time, by the use of trenches, could they safely leave their prison and their guard of fierce dogs.¹

Henin we once described as a village half-submerged in a sea of sand whose scorching waves had been driven against it by the wind. Then Bin Marta' arrived from Surabaya and with his money and his energy rushed to its rescue. He built a house and a mosque; he dug a well, installed a stationary engine, pumped water on to the sand and planted date-palms.² Then his business in Java called him back. Now he had just returned again and reverted to the work of salvaging his ancestral village. A second and more beautiful house had been built. The mosque now accommodated a remarkable school at which we intended to have a closer look. Well and gardens were only a beginning; bigger irrigation schemes were to follow. Bin Marta' is a man of initiative and drive.

Under his guidance we went that afternoon to the Mazāra which means

¹ See: *Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled*, pp. 101-104.

² *Idem*, pp. 104-106.

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the place of visitation. It is a pre-Islamic beduin sanctuary and is situated in a cleft in the rocky sides of the Wadi Henin at a distance of about three miles from the village. The spot inspires awe and reverence. At the bottom of the limestone strata, nearly half-way up the side of the wadi, is a little spring that fills a hollow in the rock with clear water. Vegetation appears in the barren surroundings. The spring is at the end of a passage that opens into the wadi wall. Above is a vault of overhanging rock. Simple utensils for making coffee and preparing food were placed near the spring for the use of pilgrims coming to this sanctuary. Close-by was a boulder worn smooth by the stroking of innumerable hands which hoped to carry away with them part of the blessing that abounds in this holy place. A Moslem name and the story of a certain Seiyid Ahmad that have been attached to the spot have saved this old Hadhrami sanctuary for worship by the beduin after their conversion to Islam.

Back in Henin Bin Marta' advised us to have a bath in the mosque as there was more room there. Possibly he wanted us to make the acquaintance of the village evening school. While we were waiting for the basins in our bath-cabins to be filled we entered the square inner court of the mosque attracted by the noise of studious youth. There we saw the boys of this small and remote desert village gathered in all their youthful freshness. Everyone had in his possession a copy of the Qurān though each copy differed from its fellow in print and dimension. How the boys with the small copies were able to read in the light of one solitary electric bulb we failed to discover. But what did that matter? This evening school was really inspiring. From the religion of Islam still emanates something of value that gives education, inspiration and a broad outlook to youth in many of the deserts of the earth. Study of the Qurān is a useful discipline and a precious preparation for the part they must play in life. What they read gradually opens their eyes to the beauty of their world-spread language. They come into contact with the idea of eternity that so far transcends the sphere of their everyday life. Then they become members of the great world of Islam and get a glimpse of its history and civilization. Their thoughts are turned to places abroad and many boys are here prepared for an adventurous life, away from their small desert village, in a far country where, however, they will soon feel at home as members of the Moslem world-brotherhood. Bin Marta' pays for the greater part of the upkeep of the school and he has appointed a good teacher. He even planned to bring a schoolmaster from Java for the many sons of

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Netherlands subjects in Henin. Such a man could have taught them the Malay language and the curriculum of the schools in Java. That plan failed for even a rich Hadhrami is of a sparing turn of mind and a Javanese does not lightly decide to go to the desert. But who knows? This practical idea may yet materialize.

On that particular evening some forty boys were sitting cross-legged in four groups round their mentors. Some were reciting the Qurān, others were reading aloud, all were shouting at the tops of their voices. The noise was overpowering but apparently they learn quite well that way.

The time came for the late evening salāt. One of the smaller boys who, at our request, was reading the impressive opening chapter of the Qurān suddenly stopped. All the others rose while the teacher climbed to the flat roof. Soon the call to prayer resounded over the silent village. The boys arranged themselves in rows behind their teacher for, as an important part of their training, they learn to perform the religious ritual with strict attention to detail. This is essential as the salāt of the Moslem is more a ritual than what we call prayer. Later on in a hard life of wandering abroad they will surely often recall the hours of evening study in the roomy, white, village mosque.

We were not allowed to leave Henin next morning without a farewell visit to the school. The boys were now waiting in front of the mosque in two long rows and there were many more of them than in the evening school. They sang together as loudly as they could but musically the performance was feeble. This concerted singing is a novelty imported from Java. After the song one of the older boys stepped forward and began addressing us in classical Arabic. That is in accordance with the custom of the country. The time for preparation, however, had been so short that after a good start the speaker got mixed up. He tried again and again, then halted in the middle of a grandiloquent sentence. "Take your paper," ordered the teacher. That done, the difficult task was safely completed. I had no written speech at my disposal, so had to try and say in much lowlier Arabic what I had in mind for those listening boys. I told them of far-away Java where many of them might go, where they would find parents, relatives and friends and where, if they wished to become useful members of the community, they would have to know much more than would be the case if they stayed in the Hadhramaut. But those who stayed behind would also have a chance of doing something useful.

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There was peace now and Henin could be made a fine and prosperous village again if they kept together and repaired and guarded their irrigation system.

We hoped, after some weeks, to return to Henin and continue our talks with Bin Marta'. He had been thinking about the future of his country and to us his ideas seemed to be of more than purely local interest. As he is no Seiyid he had no right by birth to help lead the construction of a new Hadhramaut. In his native village, however, he was free to try out his ideas and so had made a start with them. He thought of forming organizations to further the spiritual and material advancement not only of his native village but also of the small independent units that formerly flourished throughout the Hadhramaut. These organizations were to be based on communal irrigation interests. One organization, for instance, was to secure co-operation in controlling the seils, those torrents of water that rush down the rocky plateaux and mountain sides after rainstorms. Whole regions were interested in conserving as much as possible of the precious water and in dividing it justly among the landowners of the area. In former times the Sultan of Shibām had appointed representatives in most villages for dealing with the communal water problem. The head of the leading Seiyid family of the place would be the Sultan's man. For the practical side of the task the Seiyid appointed a gheiyāl or water-chief (the word is derived from gheil which means a flowing spring). If orders were not obeyed the Sultan would send soldiers to enforce them. But the weakening of the central authority and the wars that followed caused a neglect of the system of water regulation. Bin Marta' was now trying to revive the former organization of water supplies in the subsidiary wadis that are under the control of Henin. He began this work immediately after his return from Surabaya and thanks to his money and his zeal had got the people started on the repair of dams and conduits.

As we sat talking with him a gang of returning workers, mounted on camels, passed on their way back to their villages. The camels were used to carry sand to the dykes between which the seil-water is led to the fields and gardens. The men sang as they rode past the big house where lived the man who had succeeded in reuniting them and in inspiring them with new hope. Next morning we saw, moving in the opposite direction, a smaller procession of women carrying food in baskets to their working husbands.

Bin Marta' was also pondering over the problem of landed property.

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In Java he became accustomed to registration and security. Here in the Hadhramaut had once existed registration of landed property but it, too, fell into neglect. Now, as means for the provision of water improved, and war no longer devoured their time and money, a new and growing need for land registration had risen. Land values were rising and many wished to invest money in land. Already some of the money earned in Java was being put out at interest in date-gardens in the home-country. Near Al Qatn we saw land that had been bought by Bin Marta's family and was being brought under cultivation. Tens of thousands of guilders were being used for this purpose and had provoked much quarrelling about property rights. Then there was the question of lands that had been *waqf* property. According to the Moslem religion a piece of land or building, etc., can be made *waqf* by its owner. This means that the property is set apart as a pious foundation to be used in perpetuity for some laudable purpose selected by the donor. When government in a Moslem country deteriorates then the security of *waqf* property immediately becomes imperilled. The establishment of a strong, central authority in a Moslem country should lead to the restoration of the *awqāf* (plural of *waqf*) to their original religious purposes. With the help of old registers much of this property can be retraced for return to its former status and the income again made available for religious, charitable and social objects. There is much work of this kind to be done in the Hadhramaut. Merchants with experience acquired abroad might be of great assistance in putting these things right again and Ingrams and his successors will be wise if they leave room for this kind of co-operation in the rebuilding of Hadhrami society.

We left in the motor-car of Bin Marta' for Al Qatn and decided that on my return from the Hadhramaut proper in a few weeks' time I would visit Bin Marta' alone and continue the exchange of ideas with this non-Seiyid who had become a man of vision. With his younger brother at the wheel the car moved at full speed through low sand-hills across the wide Wadi Hadhramaut to the opposite side where a green belt of date-gardens and fields surrounded the hamlet of Furt al Qatn. Dukhn and museibeli, both a sort of corn with fine, round grain, were just being harvested. The women of the village were gathered in circles, squatting to thresh the corn. The ripe sheaves were brought in from the fields on camels and donkeys. The women took a handful of corn at a time and beat the ears on the trunk of date-palm that lay in front of them until the

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grains rolled out. They worked in the sun and, in order to protect themselves against the great heat, wore plaited wide-brimmed cone-shaped hats of their own handiwork as high and round as sugar-loaves. "Union is strength" they seemed to think for they had the courage to keep their places when we came near with our cameras. The conversation died down only to flare up again with volleys of laughter as soon as we had retired to a safe distance.

From Furt al Qatn onwards we saw the beauty of the Hadhramaut proper. We now travelled continually alongside or through gardens, past villages and many isolated houses of grand seigneurs and peasants. The water is here not far below the surface, about seven qāmas. It is even less the closer one gets to the centre of the wadi but there salinity increases rapidly.

Soon we were driving through the gate of Al Qatn which is completely surrounded by a wall. It is quite a small place and used to be the summer residence of the Sultans of Shibām. The palace of Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh which eight years ago had still the native hue of its locally made bricks was now all white. Warning seemed to have been sent of our coming for the servants were waiting in the hall near the main door. The Sultan himself stood to meet us in the corridor upstairs. Undisguised cordiality appeared behind his ceremonious welcome. He told us that he had heard of our approach through a wireless message, sent originally from 'Ayād, announcing our safe passing on our way to the Hadhramaut. Eight years before his welcome to us in the palace of Shibām had been cool and reserved. What had happened in the meantime?

Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh was no longer Sultan. He had come into conflict with the new régime, had been sent away from Shibām and had since lived quietly as a landlord in Al Qatn amidst his gardens and, as a man of more than average learning, amongst his books. He said that the conflict had been brought about by intrigues but he scarcely spoke of it and laughed off our expressions of sympathy and regret. He told us that he was far happier now, freed from the care and responsibility of government. His health, too, had improved. When we met him for the first time he had just recovered from a serious illness. Even now he was still thin but his eyes were bright and alert. The conversation flowed as if we were old friends. The room in which we sat shone with light, colour and cleanliness. Tea was served with biscuits and American tinned-fruits. As a special treat a large plate of Du'an honey with its unsurpassable aromatic flavour was

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put before us. We ate whole lumps of the comb while Sultan 'Ali looked on contentedly and his eldest son, a fine boy of about fourteen, stared in amazement.

'Ali bin Salāh is well-read. Freya Stark noticed this during her talks with him on the ancient history of the Hadhramaut. Philby stayed with him a whole week on his last and greatest journey in Arabia. This uneasy spirit, who is perhaps the greatest of living explorers of Arabia, was not welcome in the Hadhramaut to the Aden authorities so that his presence at Al Qatn can scarcely have helped to improve the already strained relations between Sultan 'Ali and British officials. But 'Ali bin Salāh seldom spoke about that and if he did it was half in amusement. He seemed to enjoy scientific talks with his guests and this again was an excellent opportunity for Hermann.

Agriculture was the love of his heart and he seemed to know all about it. It was to him that we entrusted the filling of our small bags with specimens of all the different sorts of corn grown in the wadi. There are many of them and he promised to give us the local names, the time each one required for ripening, and so on. He praised my earlier book on the Hadhramaut and Hermann's map. Although he did not understand English he had had it read to him in an Arabic translation.

Meanwhile in another room dinner had been prepared. There we found the same refreshing cleanliness. There too was atmosphere, and although two big bookcases stared reproachfully at a snow-white refrigerator our host was equally proud of all three.

During dinner 'Ali bin Salāh told us of his great plans for travelling. First of all he wished to take his son to Baghdad where he could study thanks to an Iraqi scholarship. Then he himself wanted to go through India to Singapore and Java in order to visit Hadhrami centres there and to see how and where the conception of the new Hadhramaut came to birth. From Java he would sail in a pilgrim-ship to Jidda in order to perform the hajj. Then back home again. His roaming spirit led this student of Arabic history and geography to further planning. 'Ali bin Salāh would then go to Europe. He wanted to see Leyden, that centre of oriental learning. The latter part of these plans, if not more, must have been swept away by the approach of war in Europe.

We could not help hoping that the present leaders of the Hadhramaut might become reconciled with Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh and open for him a way of return to some task in which the support of this keen Hadhrami

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student of the sciences might be invaluable. We did not pronounce judgement on what might have been his shortcomings nor, on the other hand, did we exclude the possibility that the British reformers of the Hadhramaut might have failed to see through local intrigue; but we felt convinced that 'Ali bin Salāh was a Hadhrami Sultan who had at least some very good qualities and who, in mental training and spiritual culture, stood well above others who in these parts had assumed the title of Sultan.

We took leave of 'Ali bin Salāh and in the afternoon drove on to the oldest and most characteristic town of the Hadhramaut—Shibām. We were familiar with her imposing silhouette but even so we were again taken by surprise at the marvel that had astounded us when we approached her the first time, fighting our way through a heavy sandstorm. Then, through parting dust clouds, we had suddenly seen, looming high up through the haze, a flat, brown sand-cake with white powdered sugar on its top. This time the air was clear; it was a day of bright sunshine. In the hot, quivering air the outlines of the town were fluffed and constantly changing. If one had not known what to expect it would have been difficult even on a clear day to recognize in this brown, ruin-like cube covered with an untidy cap of white, the compact mass of five hundred high houses, closely surrounded with date-gardens. On the left of the road we looked over a seemingly endless field of tombs. Red sandstone had been used for the two commemorative slabs set up on each tomb where head and feet had been laid. All the rest was white-washed. The red sandstone is soft and easily cut. Inscriptions told, in endless quotations from the Qurān, of the futility of man and of the greatness of Allah.

Through dry irrigation canals and over high dykes between the date-gardens we drew near the towering houses of Shibām. The backs of the houses were close together and formed the wall of the town. They constitute a formidable protection because the walls of these six and seven storeyed buildings are very thick at their bases and ventilation holes and windows only begin at ten and more yards above the ground. The gate of the town is on its southern side where the wide seil-bed, a river of sand, is a natural thoroughfare for traffic to and from the town. In the middle of the seil-bed were wells where women and slaves came to fetch water which they carried in a never-ending procession up to the gate and into the dark streets that pierce the town like narrow clefts.

With many jolts and jars the car slowly climbed from the seil-bed up a wide stone-paved slope to the gate. Here the street-urchins of Shibām

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awaited us noisily. We entered the main gate which is reserved for men, loaded camels and donkeys and occasional motor-cars. The smaller and narrower gate is for the women who carry water, or go to the wells to wash dirty clothes, or have some other pretext for escaping from the close confinement of their prison-houses and wish to see something of the outside world or hear and pass on the gossip of the town.

Through the narrow, dirty streets we drove up to the house of our host of eight years ago, the rich Singapore merchant La'jam. It was half dark in the street as only for a short time each day does the sun penetrate to the bottom of the deep rifts between the houses. The stench of offal and sewage from kitchens and bathrooms draining thickly through masonry gutters in the middle of the streets was present everywhere. Only when one entered a house and climbed to the higher storeys did one get away from the smelly obscurity of the streets. Upstairs there was light and fresh air and the gay white-wash of the living apartments of the lofty houses.

La'jam was not in and his kindly friend Āl Tuwaiy had apparently died some years before. We were thus obliged to go and call on the new Sultan whom we had intended to visit only after we had found a lodging. Sultan Sālih Āl Qa'eiti resided in the palace (husn) that dominates the whole town and is more than a hundred years old. Our first impression of a surly, untidily-dressed man was not a favourable one. His looks told of much Indian blood as is the case with most of the family of the Āl Qa'eiti Sultan. Possibly we disturbed him in his afternoon nap. Under bristling eyebrows defiant, inquisitive eyes looked at us uninvitingly. He led us to a bigger room than the one to which the soldiers had shown us and with a wave of his hand invited us to sit down in a corner beside him. He then started smoking cigarettes having given the order to prepare tea. He was taciturn and did not encourage our attempts at conversation. Time passed slowly. The arrival of our caravan with Wasi and Muhsin was a relief for the Sultan and for us. Questions were asked and experiences recounted and the Sultan began to be interested. Thanks, however, to the tea His Highness became fully awake, his taciturnity gradually vanished and his natural kindness of heart got the upper hand. Prudence had made him sour and reserved at first. It was most agreeable for us to have found the gentler side of his character for we could not go on that day and had to depend on his hospitality. Our former friends were no longer there; no motor-car was to be had in the town; we should have to go with the caravan on foot

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to Saiwūn. As the camels were tired we should not be able to leave until the next day. The Sultan took the situation lightly and at once gave orders for fodder to be given to our camels. A little later we ourselves were served with a substantial meal in which the Sultan's secretary and Muhsin took part.

The spacious reception hall was put at our disposal for the night. Prudently we enquired whether we might be permitted to sleep on one of the roof-terraces. It would be cooler there with every chance of being free from mosquitos and possibly from vermin. To the great relief of our entire party the Sultan gave his consent. That brought us the promise of a cool and undisturbed night. We should be so high above the town that we could even look down on the minaret of the mosque which, far below, stood like a toy in the corner of the square.

How fine would be the scene the next morning when the rising sun gilded the white tops of the houses of this unique wadi-town and photographing would not be forbidden. The secretary even came in the early morning, climbing endless flights of stairs, in order to show us the way to still higher terraces on the top of the high, square towers that add so much to the elegance of this admirable specimen of the Hadhrami art of building.

In whatever direction our eyes wandered the sight was captivating. To the eastward between the palm-groves appeared here and there bright-green patches of corn with brown farm houses and occasional white villas of the rich. Southward was the wide sand-river of the seil-bed in which men like ants in a row came and went between the wells and the town. In the background the green belt of Shibām's garden city led to the wall of the wadi which shone in the warm light of the morning sun. Eastwards and northwards, deep down at our feet, stretched the town with its high, brown house-blocks, of which only the tops are white, and its few streets cutting through like narrow, black clefts. We never tired of standing on such a look-out. In each one of the three big towns of the wadi we stood on such a belvedere: in Saiwūn it was the roof of the Sultan's palace and in Tarim the tiny cupola of the tallest minaret of the Hadhramaut.

Each town is of a distinct type. Shibām is the oldest and the most genuinely Hadhrami with its towering houses closely pressed together for better defence against enemies. Saiwūn is the most beautiful town of the modern Hadhramaut and has the largest belt of date-palms among which it is luxuriously situated. Saiwūn has been successful in building the best

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mosques, monumental tombs, houses and palaces with a spirit of freedom and spaciousness worthy of the riches of the new and young Hadhramaut yet still preserving much of the old architectural art. Tarīm is the town with the most modern palaces and the dreadful structure of the worst minaret. It is a town of dazzling appearance and much incongruity of building both in shape and colour. The builders have been faithful to the traditional Hadhrami building material, the sun-baked brick, but for the rest they have exchanged the gold of their own taste and craftsmanship for the dross of foreign imports.

Our stay in the palace of Shibām that began so uncertainly ended well. The shy, reserved Sultan with his unprincely appearance put aside his suspicion and showed his inborn good nature. Although we left early he was there to wish us God-speed and insisted on our drinking innumerable cups of tea with much hot milk and eating a plateful of biscuits. After a cordial handshake we set out walking to Saiwūn. The caravan had left before us which was quite contrary to caravan practice. But the Hammāmis were in a hurry to reach the end of their journey though they too wanted to see more of this bewildering Arab country. For us it was a definite advantage that no motor-car could be found in Shibām, for we were now obliged to do on foot the very attractive part of the wadi that lies between Shibām and Saiwūn.

We left the town through its only gate which stood like the dark frame of a glorious picture of light and colour. In the foreground was the wide sand-river through which peasants, tradespeople and water-carriers waded slowly towards the town; in the centre Suhail Shibām, the green garden-city, the background being formed by the brown rocks of the wadi-wall. We crossed the sand-river walking in an easterly direction towards the palm-groves. There the traffic of market-goers with their laden animals was confined between the mud-walls that enclosed the gardens of the summer-residences of the rich Shibāmis. Behind the walls came the sound of creaking pulleys over the water-wells. We exchanged greetings and jokingly answered the curious questions of the hurrying peasants. Our feet sank noiselessly into the thick layer of powdered dust. From time to time we halted to look back at the town which from the east presents a silhouette which is entirely different from that seen when approaching from the west. On this side the Sultan's palace stands out in all its glory. Its height was well judged for it dominates even the highest houses of the town. Hadhrami architecture here shows itself at its best. Although tall the

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building is elegant of line and manages to give at one and the same time an impression of strength and of great charm. Most fortunately not the whole building has been white-washed but white strips have been painted on those dull-brown walls. The whole enormous surface of the walls is harmoniously divided into rows of windows each one of which is framed with a white border. Rows of smaller openings for ventilation, equally framed in white, contrast brightly with the natural colour of the brick. The palace of Saiwūn, which we once declared to be the most beautiful building in the Hadhramaut, has changed its old Hadhrami garb for a richer one of pure white from top to bottom. Alas, what a loss is this; life has left the face of its mighty walls. In our opinion it is the husn of Shibām that now holds the palm of beauty.

Eight years before there had been bitter strife in the very territory through which we were now trekking and which is the border zone between the Qa'eiti and Kathiri domains. The date-palms had then received as much attention as was possible but only now that peace and security had been restored could one think of extending the plantations. In more than a hundred places new wells had been sunk and around them date-shoots were being planted.

In the gardens full of shadow-spotted sunlight farmers with their wives and children and an occasional cow, donkey or camel were on the ramps busily engaged in a never-ending walk up and down to raise the water-skins, overflowing with luke-warm, crystal-clear water. The children usually sat close to the mouth of the well at the top of the sloping runway. They braided fresh green lucerne round dry dhura stalks as titbits for the animals to induce them to climb quickly back to the top of the runway.

Farther away from Shibām the gardens were no longer enclosed by mud walls. When we were thirsty we merely walked across to drink of the water of a well. Siqāyas were only to be found on the bare, rocky stretches and near the many villages built on high ground where agriculture does not pay. These empty spaces the young Hadhramis use for football-grounds. Their goal-posts they make of stripped palm-leaves.

Towards Saiwūn lies the big, walled village of Al Ghūrfa, a notorious centre of war in years gone by. In 1931 trenches linked the place with its date-gardens. We had then approached travelling in a motor-car and felt ourselves conspicuous as foreigners but even so our Hadhrami guides asked us to wave our sun-helmets to make it quite clear to the garrison that we were neutral and Christian Westerners. This time we walked through

the place entering by one gate and leaving through the other. The only fine buildings were the mosque and the qubba over the tomb of a holy man.

Farther on, houses of land-owning farmers and country houses for those who had been successful abroad were being built in several places. The farmers still stick to the natural brown colour of the mud-brick. Only the window openings are framed with a lime border or accentuated by whitewashed diagonals parting from the corners. The country houses are often completely white but some owners have had the bright idea of painting them in white and grey which gives a much more pleasing effect than the application of imported colours in all the hues of the rainbow. That is what we should face later on in Saiwūn and Tarīm. Here we were still walking through a world of complete harmony between the green of the gardens and the colour of the houses, through an unspoilt land of Hadhrami beauty.

The town of Saiwūn is built on the foot of the southern wadi-wall and has a wide belt of date groves stretching eastwards, westwards and northwards towards the centre of the wadi. Our approach was from the West where the palm-belt is cut by an uncultivated, rocky continuation of the mounds of scree that lie along the foot of the southern wadi-wall. The town is protected on this side by a tall rampart of mud bricks.

We reported to the guard at the gate. Awakened from their midday doze the soldiers hurriedly seized their arms and advanced towards us completely blocking the way. They stared at us with a mixture of curiosity and distrust. It could not often have happened that in the hottest part of the day four foreigners on foot, with neither guide nor luggage, asked permission to enter the town. The commander of the guard wanted to know how we had got here and from where we had started. The answer that we came from Aden and had travelled overland to the Hadhramaut did not reassure him at all. Then we told him that we were friends of Seiyid Abu Bakr Āl Kāf and that he had invited us to be his guests. At once all suspicion was gone. A sign to the men and they stepped aside and saluted. The commanding sergeant intimated that we should walk straight on, right across the town, passing in front of the Sultan's palace, to the garden-city where we should do well to ask again and any child would be able to tell us where Seiyid Abu Bakr's guest-house was.

On our first trip to the Hadhramaut the town of Tarīm had been our goal and the place where we had rested while making new plans. Now it

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would be Saiwūn because political disturbances had driven Abu Bakr away from Tarīm. In order to accommodate the increasing number of Western visitors Abu Bakr had decided to build here a special guest-house. During our first visit to Saiwūn the Āl Kathīri Sultan, 'Alī bin Mansūr, had been our unforgettable host. But this old friend had died suddenly, only a short time before, so the difference between then and now would be great. Curiosity and expectation filled us as we walked into the town, to which we were bound by such happy memories, driving away the fatigue and listlessness of the heat. But Saiwūn was silent, stricken dumb by the fierce sun. The streets were empty and without a sound. Around the muddy pools formed by dirt and sewage from the houses sloughing down the gutters in the walls a cat was noiselessly hunting for something to eat and a lonely chicken scratching, while stray dogs slept half-covered with filthy, but cooling, mud.

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THROUGH the midday silence of the streets in the populous quarter of Saiwūn we walked towards the Sultan's palace. The streets of this town are wider and laid out in more orderly fashion than is the case in most other towns of Arabia. The houses are kept in better repair too but the pristine whiteness of prosperity is lacking. This, however, makes the spotless mosques, with usually a siqāya close by, stand out better in their beauty.

We found our way with some difficulty to the Sultan's palace which stands between the old and poorly-built town and the villa-quarter with its gardens. In front of the palace a space has in recent times been cleared for a sūq or bazaar organized on modern lines. A little farther on is the now walled-in cemetery with its many attractive qubbas. The open space around the palace is wide and is an improvement for the town as well as for the building that we once thought the finest product of Hadhrami architecture. Now it stands there in a new garment, dead-white from top to bottom. A high, wide terrace has been built in front, connected by a gallery with high doors and windows to the huge mass which was originally a square and sober keep. The addition has a distinctly Indian touch and contrasts disadvantageously with the severe simplicity and strength of the original Hadhrami structure. The tapering round towers at the four corners have been increased in height and are now crowned with Indian cupolas. They have lost their air of unyielding defensive might and have become meaningless and ugly. We viewed the transformation with sorrow.

But we had to go on; we could pay a visit to the new Sultan later and then at leisure have a quiet look at the much-changed palace. We crossed the dry seil-bed that separated us from the garden-city. There, too, much seemed to have changed. In former times the green of the palms dominated and the white country-houses only just peeped above them. Now taller houses had been built and no longer in the pure, old style. The brown of the mud brick and the shimmering white which used to go so well with the soft green of the date-palms, had given way to affronting colours

from Western markets. A tall building in light green clamoured for attention. It shrieked a contrast with its surroundings. Looking closer we saw that it had lilac window frames and a lilac border along the top and, to make the tragedy complete, we read in tall Latin characters on the front wall: "S. A. Building". It was small consolation to learn that this name had nothing to do with Nazi political labels but simply meant that the late Sultan 'Ali had had this house built.

Our thoughts went back eight years, when this same Sultan had welcomed us in his modest garden villa "Izz ad Dīn" (glory of the religion). What simplicity and attractiveness was there! And even if no names were painted on the outside of the buildings yet we remembered them because they were in harmony with the local atmosphere.

Not all true beauty has disappeared. Part of the old is still standing but nearly all the new is a poor imitation of the West with exaggeration both in shape and colours. And the new Sultan has built close beside the lilac S. A. Building his own new country house in saffron yellow. "Izz ad Dīn" was still there but with a storey added on the top. It had preserved its simple, white exterior but no longer caught the eye as the two new, bigger buildings roughly disturbed the peaceful charm of the garden.

In this part of Saiwūn one walks through earthy lanes as all the gardens are surrounded by high mud-walls. One does not see much of the beauty inside but occasionally, through an open gate, just catches a glimpse of it.

Seiyid Abu Bakr bin Sheikh Āl Kāf also lived in the garden-city. He had bought there one of the fine old-style houses. Then he bought a large piece of ground on the edge of the garden-quarter and built there an additional modern structure as guest-house for his many foreign visitors. We were soon standing in front of the gate that gave entrance to the new garden. Farther on we came to the door of the house itself. Around it were fruit trees and in the doorway had been glazed in Arabic and English the traditional greeting: "Ahlan wa sahlan—Welcome!"

Three of the sons of Seiyid Abu Bakr and his private secretary Hasan Āl Sheiba who at the last moment had heard of our coming stood beneath the sign and repeated the words written on it. They were astonished to learn that we had walked all the way from Shībām. For many years they themselves had not done such a thing and they seemed almost to have forgotten that it was possible. We told them that we had walked a whole month through very difficult country and so this last little stretch had been quite a pleasure trip.

Their answer in Arabic sounded like music in our ears: "Now you are at home, this is your house". And what a house! A regular palace—the expression of Seiyid Abu Bakr's hospitality in bricks and mortar. His guiding principle had been to create a place where Westerners could feel at home. He has succeeded so well that none of those who have had the privilege of setting foot in this domain of Arab hospitality will ever forget the delights to be found there.

To write about the architectural qualities of this house is as beyond our reach as it would be for a child to describe his own home. Some of Abu Bakr's guests have entered here after trekking through dusty wadis or over scorching jōls. R.A.F. officers and British administrators flying through whirlwinds and hot sand-storms have stepped here straight out of their planes. All have found luxuries such as no oasis ever boasted of. And in the host they have had the privilege of meeting a Hadhrami who, with great simplicity, devotes himself and his wealth to the well-being of his fellow-men. Yet the best of his hospitality is his own conversation.

In his company one always met other Hadhramis who were preoccupied with the present and future of their nation. Here was also a remarkable interest in political developments abroad, an interest which was born and nourished by wireless broadcasts in Arabic. What was happening to their compatriots in Java and elsewhere engaged their full attention. Last, but not least, they were, as Moslems, deeply interested in the problems of Islam that reflect the tension and symptoms of crisis in the world of to-day. For hours on end we talked on all these subjects with the leaders of the new Hadhramaut in an atmosphere of mutual confidence which permitted an outspoken exchange of opinions. Not less in this sense did Abu Bakr honour the device which he had inscribed over one of the doors of the guest-house: *Beitun kullu man dakhalahu kāna āminan*. (A house in which everyone who enters is safe.) Safe in its widest meaning, that is, safe in body and spirit.

In this house ended the first and most important part of our undertaking. Our Hammāmi camel-men had decided to go back making a detour along the wide, sandy wadi route to Shabwa, so as to avoid the 'Aqaba Bā Tēs and then proceeding by way of 'Ayād to their tents of black goats' hair near the ancient little town of Nisāb.

We had made up our minds to rest here while preparing plans for a forced march due north to the border of "The Empty Quarter". This done, we would try to make our way back to the coast by a route between

the two that had been already mapped and described. We had in mind the caravan track through the Wadi bin 'Ali and counted on the advice and assistance of Seiyid Abu Bakr in carrying out these two further parts of our travel-scheme.

While we were explaining this to him he looked at us as if to say: "Now you are much older than when you first came but in your planning you are as foolish as you were eight years ago". That he was never quick to take a decision we remembered well from our first contact but from his kind and earnest look we understood that he would again help us and that his well-weighed advice and his extensive knowledge of and influence among the beduin tribes would again be at our disposal. When he returned to his house without saying one word more about the plans we had put before him we knew that he would think over them, would send out messengers to call in trustworthy guides from the regions we should have to cross and that some days later he would come back with fully-prepared plans and directions for the next stage of our trip.

There followed days of care-free relaxation in Saiwūn when we renewed contact with people and places and continued arranging and collating the information and material we had gathered. Each of us had a spacious room where dust-covered luggage could be unpacked and dirty clothes could be set out for washing. Sitting at a small table in the refreshing surroundings of a daily-watered garden of fruit trees, flowers and vegetables, we could write and work for hours undisturbed. No sun urged us on, no harsh beduin voices jarred upon us. We had no worries about food or drink, nor were we haunted by the prospect of clearing rocks and stones and setting up our camp-beds at the end of the day. It did one good to look round the room and see there a bed with clean sheets on it and a mosquito-net to keep out flies and mosquitos, a bed standing ever ready for use and soft to lie on. And then to be able to have a bath every day in bathrooms with small swimming-pools of crystal-clear water! After rubbing with much soap one softly glided into the lukewarm water and gazed at the brightly-tiled walls. Water in which one floated and which soothed aching feet and sunburnt skin. Water for which we had recently craved and which had been carried prudently, carefully, the whole way, though it was often foul-smelling. Here was an abundance of excellent, clear, odourless water, a luxury which Seiyid Abu Bakr offered his guests in rich measure and was one of their most deeply appreciated pleasures.

Greater delight awaited us at night-time. On the terrace in front of

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the house was a much bigger pool, filled to the brim with the same excellent water. Before going to bed we dived into it. This pool was big enough for a real swim and the water was warm from the heat of the day. There was a refreshing coolness when the dry night-breeze fanned our wet bodies. Floating on our backs we looked up into the starlit sky whose silent glory had become so familiar during our nights on the jōl. Frogs kept us company.

In the afternoon when the house threw its shade on the terrace, we used to sit on some rugs spread out on the edge of the birka (pl. birak, pool) and talk with guests who began to drop in, drink small glasses of tea and smoke cigarettes. Seiyid Abu Bakr arrived two days after us having finished the negotiations with the beduin leaders in Haura. In the morning he often came to enjoy a quiet hour of work in the garden. Sometimes he came and went unnoticed and sometimes he used to take the opportunity for a talk in privacy. Gradually we found ourselves back on the old terms of mutual understanding and the subjects of our conversation drew nearer to the Hadhramaut and to his personal responsibilities. His earlier sympathy for Hermann was unchanged and he asked him about the origin of the layers of loess in the valleys, the level of the ground-water, the possibilities for irrigation and the roads to be built.

Soon after his arrival he asked me confidentially what Hermann thought of the Hitlerite régime and of the trend of affairs in Nazi Germany. Hermann lives for his work. He shares the sufferings of most Germans. Neither he nor Wasi saw a way-out for their country under the conditions of that time, but both were undefiled in the abyss of shame through which their nation was passing. Gratefully and with understanding Seiyid Abu Bakr followed my explanation. Recent developments in the Hadhramaut had driven me with growing conviction to complete co-operation with Great Britain. In spite of the deepening tragedy of Germany it was possible for us to resume former contacts with friends and we continued our talks trusting and being frank with each other although there was a wound that smarted and prevented us from saying all that was in our hearts.

First of all the situation in Europe came up for discussion. Nowhere in this country could we escape that ordeal. The former outspoken sympathy for Germany was changing. Indignation against Italy rose high. The contact with the British authorities in Aden had become so intimate and the Hadhramis had linked their future so definitely to British

guidance that it was quite logical that England's attitude and actions should be submitted to the severe test of criticism.

Invariably the British policy in Palestine was neither understood nor appreciated by the Arabs. Everyone here listened to wireless broadcasts from Rome and from Egypt and only a few days previously Berlin had started broadcasts in Arabic. Anti-Jewish propaganda was imbibed readily while the British proudly remained silent. They did not defend themselves against such attacks. I mentioned some of the Jewish arguments in this drama of world dimensions and drew attention to the well-balanced, factual nature of British news as compared with the impassioned, often abusive and invariably self-glorifying manner of speech of the dictators' spokesmen. My advice was: "Listen attentively and then choose what to believe."

Though these conversations were embarrassing in view of the composition of our little group they recurred daily. Etiquette did not allow us to put aside all this preliminary talk and bring the discussion straight to their own political and religious embarrassments. But the more we talked the closer we got to their problems and conflicts as Hadhramis and Moslems.

At the beginning of our stay in Saiwūn Seiyid Abu Bakr had brought us with visible satisfaction into contact with an agreeable old greybeard, the Seiyid 'Abd ur Rahmān bin 'Ubeid Allāh, whom he styled the "Mufti" of the Hadhramaut. Three times this Moslem scholar had travelled to Java. There he had met the Netherlands Government's advisers for Islamic Affairs. He even claimed to have met the man who was the founder of Holland's modern Islamic policy, Professor Snouck Hurgronje. Later on, when speaking of a book in which were collected all the traditions of the Prophet and which he considered to be of great value to every educated Moslem, he mistook this famous student of Islam for his successor, Professor Wensinck. Then he unexpectedly asked whether we took the history, lives and beliefs of the Moslems of our days for the real Islam as many orientlists had done. Or did we know the *real* Islam in its essence and history? Our answer was that we had tried under Snouck Hurgronje's stern guidance to approach the real Islam and that we were fully aware of the fact that in these days the religion and general outlook of Islam was passing through an all-embracing crisis. The "Mufti" was not at all at ease about conditions in Islam at the present time. Many theologians before him have had the same anxieties and looked back sadly to the

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idealized, golden days of the early centuries of Islam. For the re-establishment of the pure doctrine and the triumph of Islam throughout the world they looked forward to the advent of a Mahdi, a prophet guided by Allah in the right way, a messianic figure.

Switching over to more material matters our venerable visitor asked Hermann some questions about the geography and geology of the country. Then, little by little, he started questioning us about conditions in the West. How could it be explained that in a continent with such a high standard of civilization one nation always seemed to be ready for the brutal annihilation of another? How could true civilization exist amid such a lack of righteousness? Our answer lay in the same direction as that to his complaint about the degeneration of Islam. Nations and governments in the West had lost the fear of God and the deep conviction of their dependence on God's guidance; they had come to believe in their ability to further the happiness of mankind in their own strength alone. This vainglory would lead to the appalling catastrophe we all saw inevitably approaching. The "Mufti" took his leave, promising to come back and continue this conversation.

Naturally we soon paid a visit to the Sultan's palace. The blinding sunlight was reflected mercilessly in its high, wide front and we approached the gate giving entrance to the terrace with blinking eyes. Once we had been welcomed here as friends. Now we should no more find him who had ruled Saiwūn with a strong hand, who had laid the foundations of order and cleanliness, who had preserved architectural monuments and improved them to the best of his ability. The Sultan 'Ali bin Mansūr was no more but we should see his sons and some of his advisers and his brother, Sultan Ja'far bin Mansūr, who had succeeded him.

At the outer gate a guard of honour was lined up and saluted us. At the inner gate the same ceremony. The soldiers were wearing attractive and well-fitting uniforms and had British infantry rifles. The people of Saiwūn had wanted a more colourful dress, but Ingrams stuck to khaki which the Arabs do not like or, at least, so some of the local officials told me. In the corridor the sons of the late Sultan came forward to meet us. They were slender, clever-looking boys. The older ones still remembered us from our first visit. The interior of this Hadhrami palace impressed us anew by the tidiness and order of its high corridors and well-lit stairways. Sultan Ja'far bin Mansūr welcomed us in a large hall. We sat on the carpets that lay alongside the walls and leaning on the inevitable cushions talked

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quietly with this silent monarch whose face clearly bore traces of the illness from which he was suffering. His own children and those of his dead brother squatted at the opposite side of the hall where the servants were. Tea was served. Then a table-cloth was laid on the floor in front of us and biscuits, tinned doorian, imported from Java, and lumps of preserved ginger set on it. The combination was an original one but it tasted fine.

Sultan Ja'far was sick and tired but for his dead brother's sake he disposed himself cordially towards us. Hasan, the private secretary of Seiyid Abu Bakr who had come with us, had the happy thought of asking whether we might be allowed to go and see the view from the top of the roof. No objection was raised and, preceded by the younger generation, we began the climb to the roof of the highest building in Saiwūn. We finally came to the living quarters and were piloted through a number of agreeably furnished rooms to the topmost roof-terraces. We were now standing one storey higher than eight years ago for the roof of the palace had been added to. Around us the noonday glare was reflected in the whitewashed roof and its parapets while overhead the sun beat down pitilessly.

Far below us was spread the same Saiwūn but with embellishments and additions that the orderly progress of the late Sultan 'Ali had carried out and could easily be distinguished. Prosperity shone from the well-kept houses with their white upper-storeys. The palm-belt had been extended and was more speckled with white country-houses. The cemetery in the centre of the town and at the foot of the palace had had the care and attention that this beautiful resting-place of the dead with its exquisite qubbas deserved. The mosques with their unspoilt, tapering minarets appeared here and there between the houses. The palace, of course, had its own mosque and from our lofty perch we looked down on its white, open, inner square and its tiny minaret.

At a short distance stood the smaller and equally white palace of the Sultan of Tarīm who seemed to prefer living in Saiwūn away from the administrative responsibilities of his own town, the sultanate of which he gladly confided to a brother and to the Sāda. Sultan Ja'far had followed us all the way up to the roof. He liked to see us taking photographs and it did him good to watch our enjoyment of the beauty of his town. Naturally the boys were eager to be photographed too, but in the blinding light of the roof that was not possible. So an appointment was made with them

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for the next day in the garden villa "‘Izz ad Dīn". On the palace-roof yet another plan was made: to climb above Saiwūn, to see more of this magnificent centre of the Wadi Hadhramaut and to fix it with mapping instruments and take still more photographs.

We started next morning before dawn with some people who knew the town and its surroundings well and climbed a steep shepherds' track up the rock-face. Our Aden soldiers joined us to get a little exercise and to feast their eyes upon the extraordinary charm of this beautiful country. On the highest point of the cliff at the foot of which the town is built we stood together waiting for the sun to rise. First the jōl, then the borders of the wadi became visible in the orange-red light. Next the terraced rooftops of the high buildings of the town, the crowns of the date-palms and the mud-brick houses of the poor emerged from the grey dusk. Nobody spoke, but the eye absorbed and the heart leapt at the beauty of another day born into the world. Westward we looked up the wadi to Shibām. Eastward the wadi was less straight; the ruined town of Mariama was visible but not so Tariba and Tarīm. The view on all sides was beautiful but most thrilling straight downwards where we could see the roofs of Saiwūn, the date-gardens with their channels for seil-water and the white houses spread out like a relief-map. On the summit of every headland that protruded into the wadi we saw a small flat-topped mound, the remainder of a stratum which had been carried away by erosion. Here we were at a height of 1,140 feet above the town but the 'Aqaba Bā Tēs, by which we had descended into the Wadi 'Amd, was three hundred feet higher still. For a man from the Low Countries, however, it was impressive enough on this nearly vertical vantage-point where looking over the toes of one's feet one could just see the tops of minarets. Hermann and Wasi with their instruments not only took the bearings of the wadi with its promontories, villages and tributary wadis, but they also mapped out the whole town of palaces, mosques, monuments and streets.

Eight years ago Hermann had done much similar work. In accordance with the wish of Sultan 'Alī he laid out an aerodrome to the east of where we were now standing. The enterprising Mr. Besse from Aden had several times made use of this landing-ground for his pioneer regular air service between Aden, Mukalla and the Hadhramaut. But the time was not ripe for this bold initiative. The R.A.F. raised objections to the proximity of the high wadi-walls and made a new airfield more to the middle of the wadi. This was the one now in use by the British officials who were assisting

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the Hadhramis and teaching them the art of administering a country at peace.

On one of our walks with Hasan Āl Sheiba we were shown a massive mud building, the first modern prison in the wadi. The system of keeping hostages at the seat of government seems to have been unknown originally in the Hadhramaut. Now it had been officially adopted in order to keep in check and in obedience to the law those far-off tribes whose habitat could only be reached after long and exhausting travel. This hostage idea was responsible for the failure of Ingrams' first attempt to have the sons of sultans and local authorities sent to Aden for a good school education. The parents thought that their sons were being taken as hostages. Confidence will have to grow in such matters. Parents must first try themselves to arrange their children's education and only after they have experienced several failures will they be willing to accept educational advice from Westerners.

Up to now they have placed their confidence in newly-fledged self-governing Moslem states like Egypt and Iraq. In education the question of religion holds among them such an important place that before all else they wish to have their children educated in a completely Moslem atmosphere. So we learnt that soon the first groups of boys would leave for schools in Baghdad and Cairo which they considered better than entrusting children to a Christian Western Power even although politically that same Power inspired complete confidence. The Hadhrami does not yet trust the care of the soul of his child to the British and for this, whether justified or not, we must respect the parents.

As was to be expected we had many talks on the new, close relations with Great Britain. Some of the men we met criticized Abu Bakr and his policy. He had been left practically alone to carry the responsibility for the Hadhrami share in the new government of the country. It is very human to forget privileges quickly once they have been acquired and to look upon duties and restrictions of freedom as a heavy burden, as did these critics. They feared that Seiyid Abu Bakr's great prestige would not prove an adequate bulwark against excessive British interference. Seiyid Abu Bakr was not sufficiently acquainted with the hard realism of the world. He only knew the Hadhramaut for he had only once left his country on a short trip to Egypt. We dealt explicitly with those who came to us with such criticism. We stressed the fact that they themselves had asked the British to step in and put an end to their internecine warfare. A start had

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been made. They would do better to join in now and not let one man alone carry the burden which in the long run might prove too heavy for him. Were there no other able Hadhramis, future leaders of their people, willing to learn the art of self-government without, however, forgetting that England's protection would always be necessary? In the world of to-day a country as small as theirs could not do without such protection and once they accepted this axiom they could not choose better than they had chosen. The Italy of Mussolini and the Soviet Union had both showed vague interest in Southern Arabia. Seeing that, every Hadhrami should know what to do. If he had to make a choice he should put his trust in England. We recognized that it was difficult for many of them to accept the inevitability of such a decision. All sorts of rich Hadhramis had for years on end carried on their private, petty wars. They had surrounded their fortified houses with trenches and had fought for independent rulership in village and town. They had not suffered much and had still many private scores to pay off so that for them it was difficult to switch over from a free-lance struggle for personal ambition to co-operation in the great merging of the Hadhramaut as a whole, particularly under the direction of a leading Western Power. They had, however, taken the step and must now sacrifice the sham liberty in which they had lived and its threadbare cloak of romanticism and glory. They were unable to make up their minds finally to close this chapter of their history and start a new one. But this hesitation would have to be overcome for they must themselves build the new Hadhramaut. The men who had returned from abroad and had the realistic grasp of business men had had to give the push to get co-operation started. Men like 'Awadh bin Marta' had had to set the example and those who had hitherto been onlookers must now join in. We tried to convince many who were listening sulkily that their place was behind the men who had already put their shoulders to the task, behind Seiyid Abu Bakr and Ingrams, the founders of the new Hadhramaut.

We took advantage of our days of rest in Saiwūn to make a trip to Tarīm. This town, once famous as a centre of learning throughout the whole of the southern half of Arabia, was the place where new political thoughts took root. What had become of Tarīm in eight years? Seiyid Abu Bakr himself offered us a car for the journey. ~

The road which goes straight through the wadi towards Tarīm was now safe. When we were there the first time Tarīm was in a state of war with Tariba and, in order to maintain contact with the rest of the wadi, Tarīm

had built a road circumventing Tariba territory but zigzagging with difficulty over a ridge of the jōl which penetrates here far into the wide wadi. That was a perilous road and more suitable for camels than for motor-cars. This time we had no need to avoid the villages and gardens. We drove through the gardens of Saiwūn to Mariama, once a resort of brigands but now long cleared of them and laid in ruins. Farther on we passed a solitary hill, Qāriet as Senahiya, on the top of which the outlines of Himyaritic ruins were distinguishable. Remains of strongly-built walls stood on massive, masonry foundations that had been cemented together with the steeply-sloping hill-front of boulders. Fragments of pottery lay about and others could, we were told, be found by superficial digging. We saw no carvings or inscriptions on the stones. Possibly the site was one of the frontier fortifications of the Sabæan kingdom like the much larger ruins of Al 'Urr that stand in the wadi a few days' trek eastwards of Tarīm.

Our road then lay for several miles through uncultivated and uninhabited territory. Now that the wars were over this, too, might perhaps change. It was here that we came across a remarkable shrine. Against the rocky flank of the southern wadi-wall pure white qubbās had been built with a long whitewashed stair connecting them to a small mosque. Together they formed a monument to Seiyid Ahmad bin 'Isa Āl Muhājir (the Migrator), the ancestor of all the Hadhrami Seiyids. The story is told that he came from Basra in Iraq and made his way to Mecca in order to perform the hajj (pilgrimage). From Mecca his steps led to the Hadhramaut, to the little town Al Hajarein in the Wadi Du'an, famous in antiquity. Finally he came to the Wadi Hadhramaut where he found some members of the Moslem sect of the Ibadites. According to the traditional story he is said to have resorted to battle in order to convert them to the orthodox belief and, having done that, he transformed the country into one large garden. His mortal remains lie buried here in the wilderness which became a place of *ziyāra* (religious visitation) especially for women. From the exterior the shrine is a typically Hadhrami centre of cult-worship and resembles the principal sanctuary of this country, the Qabr Nebi Allāh Hūd.

Nobody was to be seen there. The small buildings were well kept. Even the floors and the flights of long stairs were spotlessly white as if they had just been whitewashed. At the foot of the scree-wall of the wadi stood the mosque and connected with it a bathroom for the ritual ablutions.

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Close by the centre of the shrine a simple, square structure with a dome-shaped roof had been erected above the place where the first Seiyid of the Hadhramaut had ended his adventurous worldly career. The tomb was without embellishment but from the ceiling hung a sort of mosquito-net. At the head of the tomb there was a niche in the wall. In it was placed a small lamp that is probably lighted by pilgrims when they visit the place for prayer and meditation, expecting to receive a blessing in that holy spot where the very atmosphere is thick with blessings. From this spot a stairway led up the scree-slope to a terrace made of heaped stones on which stood a third building also covered with a dome-shaped roof. Inside there were several tombs and the floor was covered with mats and the indispensable utensils of the traveller such as coffee-pots and small cups all ready for use. We saw no guardian yet everything was scrupulously clean and tidy. Out of awe for the holy place visitors doubtless took care that things were kept in good order. We carefully closed the doors of both tomb and mosque and left this silent place of pilgrimage. It is quite possible that the site is historically authentic. He who brought the generation of the Sāda, those direct descendants of the Prophet by his son-in-law 'Ali and his daughter Fātima, to the Hadhramaut, is worthy of pious remembrance. Though the story mentions that he found already here members of a Moslem sect it was in the interest of Seiyid Ahmad and of his descendants to secure an honoured place in public life for the orthodox version of the religion of the Prophet. He succeeded in doing that although many concessions were made to pre-Islamic beliefs. Throughout the centuries that have followed the arrival of Al Muhājir the Sāda have been able to form a class socially-privileged as no other Moslem country has ever produced. The Islam of the Hadhramaut has a definite local stamp which it derives from the Sāda who do their utmost to preserve it as their own private interest.

Farther on, in the direction of Tarīm, stands the smaller tomb of the son of Seiyid Ahmad bin 'Isa Āl Muhājir and farther still we saw the date-plantations and houses of the important village of Tariba. Tariba belonged to and was under the protection of beduin tribes. For long it had succeeded in being independent of the Āl Kathīri Sultans and was often a source of great annoyance to Saiwūn and Tarīm. That had been the case eight years ago when we had had to give Tariba a wide berth and pass along the opposite side of the wadi taking the mountain road to Tarīm. Tariba had, however, been brought to reason by the Sultan of Saiwūn and it now

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participated in the blessings of peace. The fertile gardens which we crossed were well cultivated and many new houses in the Tarīm manner were under construction. Some of the children playing at the roadside had been born in Java and, to judge by their features, were of purely Javanese mothers.

We entered the gate of Tarīm, passed the large, well-kept cemetery and made straight for the big, new house of Seiyid Abu Bakr's youngest brother, 'Umar bin Sheikh Āl Kāf, whom we knew from our first trip. Tarīm had gone through troublous times in recent years but they had left few traces behind and the town was being constantly reconstructed and improved.

When we met our host eight years before he had recently returned from a life of business in Singapore and we had visited him in what was then his new palace. Now he had built a second and even more impressive building for his expanding family and in the interval had also travelled to Egypt and Europe and had performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. Thanks to contact with the Javanese Vice-Consul when in Mecca his sympathies for the Netherlands Indies had been strengthened, so that we felt at home in the newest palace of the most modern town in the Hadhramaut and knew that we were welcome there. Philby and Freya Stark too had found hospitality in Seiyid 'Umar's house when they visited Tarīm.

It was a special privilege to meet again those old friends who were Seiyid Abu Bakr's daily companions and to see the now grown-up younger generation of the Āl Kāf family with whom we used to swim at sunset in the pool of Seiyid 'Umar's palm-garden. Seiyid Muhammad bin Hāshim, one of the most learned of the Hadhramis, was still there with his old circle of friends. A mutual sympathy united me to Seiyid Hāshim dating from the time when he was engaged in press and education work in Surabaya and Cairo. I then learnt to appreciate him as a quick-witted man with the gentleness of a scholar. Like Seiyid 'Umar he had come straight from the strife and action of life in a large modern city to the silent, undisturbed life and the simple abundance of the rich in Tarīm and neither of the two had been able to free himself from its grip. We called on both to return to the busy world outside. Seiyid Hāshim shook his fine but greying head and said that he had to keep company with a mother on the last stage of her earthly journey. Seiyid 'Umar had his building programme to finish. Both kept an observant eye on recent developments in their country and would of course give assistance to their

good friend and brother Seiyid Abu Bakr should he need it. If towards the end of his life the latter has not given away all his wealth in helping other people it will be thanks to Seiyid 'Umar and other members of his family. Seiyid Hāshim (for me he is always "Gūru Hāshim") spoke warmly of Ingrams and his work. That was a good sign. He saw mistakes and shortcomings too and pointed them out. Such friends are of great help to the new administrators. Let us hope that they will be wise enough to appreciate and profit by them.

There was also another, the eldest Āl Kāf brother, Seiyid 'Abd ur Rahmān, and we should have much liked to be able to stay longer in order to get to know these men really well and to exchange opinions with them about the great chance they had in the midst of a nation that had refound itself and was being helped by a powerful friend on the road to revival and enhanced possibilities.

Yet another noteworthy Seiyid crossed our path here. He was the man responsible for the new palaces of Tarīm and for Abu Bakr's guest-house in Saiwūn. Without any technical training he had had the temerity to set up these huge buildings in mud-bricks and wood and, more recently, a little cement. As we were among friends we could say quite openly that our great admiration for the ability and inventive genius of the architect was tempered with serious complaints against some modern practices. Hearing this, all looked at us astonished. They seemed to have expected that imitation of Western models would be regarded by us as a sign of progress. We told them with conviction how much we admired the real Hadhrami architecture, we and all those who had studied photographs of it. We saw in it an art that had made marvellous use of the light, colour, shapes and forms of this land and its climate, an architecture that knew the value of that simple material, the sun-baked mud-brick and used it in an honest and logical way. Wherever the Hadhrami had built and given shape and dimension in the imprint of the tradition that had been developed and handed down through the centuries, there he made works of art. But where he started his mock-façades and mixed Indian and all kinds of Western styles, where he painted coloured bricks, there he did his material a disservice and was false to his tradition. There a valuable, honest and noble part of the Hadhramaut had been renounced in favour of something that would not stand the test of time and would soon come to be detested.

Our listeners could not at first believe their ears. They were still

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drunk with the new shapes and colours. This restless desire for change must continue like a disease until it cures itself, or our modern world, becoming more and more monotonously uniform, will have to dispense with the Hadhramaut contribution to architectural beauty.

Before the great heat of the day set in we went into the town to get a fresh impression of Tarīm after eight years. Everywhere in the streets mud-bricks were lying for the many houses in the course of erection there. Many others, formerly in ruins, had now been cleared; the town looked tidier, better, newer. We passed some brand-new palaces of merchant princes from Singapore and Java. From half-way up the wadi-wall we looked out over the panorama. From a distance the changes were less conspicuous but one had the general impression that the relation of the built-up area to the date gardens had changed: the gardens had been neglected while the fury of building raged.

The gardens of Tarīm now cried out for attention. In their hearts all the Āl Kāf were garden-lovers. Seiyid Abu Bakr forgot his political cares when gardening. In one garden we met the son of a recently deceased member of the Āl Kāf family. He lived amidst the luxury of his garden. We arrived without warning and found that he was in the young people's club where he plays an influential part. We were invited into his reception room while the club was being telephoned. Yes, Tarīm had a telephone now, with a very restricted number of connexions. Again it was an Āl Kāf family business. In the room where we waited a large bouquet of living green stood on a table. The windows, which reached to the floor, were wide open. This was possible here because the palm-trees grew close to the house and dimmed the light with their dense foliage. Heavy, bright-yellow clusters of fruit were hanging in front of the windows through which we heard the fluttering and singing of birds.

Then our host arrived, greeted us cordially and ordered tinned fruit, tea, honey and cigarettes. The wireless was switched on and Paris, in words full of hope, told of the desire for peace in France and England. Light music followed this welcome optimism and our friends in Tarīm were pleased that the radio had not betrayed their hospitality. Our host was anxious to show us the result of his labours in the garden. We were invited to taste his huge pomegranates and admired his figs, papaws, bananas, chillies and cabbages. At the end of the garden was a well from which a Deutz motor raised water for the garden and the house. The

water level here was thirty-six feet below the surface. The water was clear and had a good taste.

Our host had never been beyond Mukalla. His generation reaps the fruits of the toil and sweat of their fathers. It lives surrounded by luxury and has itself never faced a serious task. A little thought was given to the problems of the country but there was much talk and no action. The British must do it, but no, better not. Who then? The uncle, who gave himself heart, soul and body, with all his possessions, to the common cause, was less admired than feared: from the point of view of the family wealth he was in fact a dangerous man. These young men enjoyed this good earthly life. They loved their wives and their often numerous children. They were proud of their luxuriously furnished houses and they liked to sit in the shade of their date-gardens drinking small glasses of sweet tea while squatting on fine carpets and quietly discussing with their friends the topics of the day. Great vices they had not; alcoholic drinks they did not know; smoking was enjoyed with restraint. The religion of the Prophet to which they owed their respected place in society was practised faithfully in its outward forms. The members of these families who live abroad develop great acumen and fight with much energy and inborn shrewdness for the accumulation of worldly wealth. The sons who had stayed here had received the traditional training in religion and had learnt to appreciate rest and ease. In vitality they could not approach the others who found abroad the complete opposite of such indolence. Many of the young men complained of their lot and compared themselves with those others who had studied and worked abroad and now occupied important posts in the land of their adoption. They were mostly the victims of the egoistic love of their parents.

Before we returned to Seiyid 'Umar's house we climbed once more the Hadhramaut's highest minaret and looked over the town from the tiny cupola on its top. The minaret Āl Mihdhār is a technical achievement, not an architectural one. The simple lines of the traditional Hadhrami minaret had been abandoned and, instead, a thin, square tower had been built, full of windows and ventilation-openings. Decorated bands and corner ornaments had been added and when the tower might have seemed complete a small square room had been constructed on the top of it in order to be quite sure that all height-records had been broken. Towards the top the winding stairs became narrower. There were 150 steps so that the top of the minaret must be about 150 feet above the ground. Mud

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bricks and an occasional cross-beam were the material with which this fragile structure was made. Under the cupola the three of us, Hermann, Wasi and myself stood pressed together as in a narrow cage between the round mud-pillars that closed in on us and through which, on our knees, we took our photographs.

No town had shown so much building activity as Tarīm. The work had its own local character and type. But Shibām and Saiwūn seen from the roofs of their sultans' palaces were more beautiful. The Sultan of Tarīm had not yet a palace in his town. He preferred to live in Saiwūn for in the neighbourhood of the mighty Seiyids he did not feel entirely at ease.

After a delicious Javanese "rijsttafel" (rice-table) in Seiyid 'Umar's place each of us was shown to a fine retiring-room. In the afternoon we drove back.

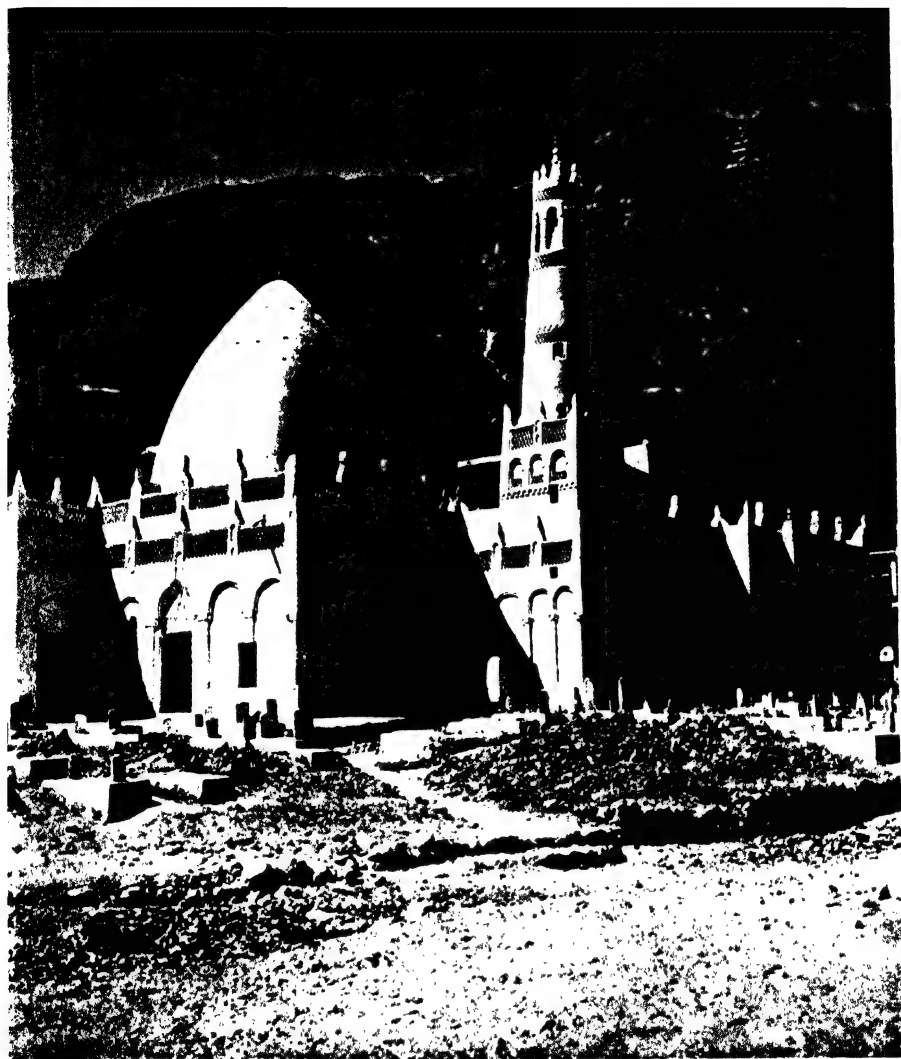
Tarīm was once Hadhramaut's town of science and its centre of religion with more than 330 mosques. The schools for religious teaching still retained their fame and the great number of students in the streets attracted our attention. Had we not had the company of an old father who had walked from Lodar with our caravan and who had come from Ibb in the Yemen to visit his student son in Tarīm? The seekers of religious wisdom still come here from far-away corners of Arabia but it seemed as if the schools lived only on their former fame.

Eight years before Tarīm had been a town of much youthful enthusiasm for a new Hadhramaut. They had talked of reform and a national rebirth. But it was the older people who took the initiative and acted, who had given up an independence they found themselves unable to control, and had applied to the British to ensure peace. Now the younger generation stood sullenly looking on. Tarīm had seen the centre of the movement of regeneration pass to Saiwūn. She herself had become a silent place and lost some of her importance when her man of action, Seiyid Abu Bakr, who courageously never shirked responsibility, left Tarīm and made his home in Saiwūn. It was he who had made the first motor road out of the wadi, the road that leads from Tarīm to the coastal towns of Ash Shihṛ and Mukalla.

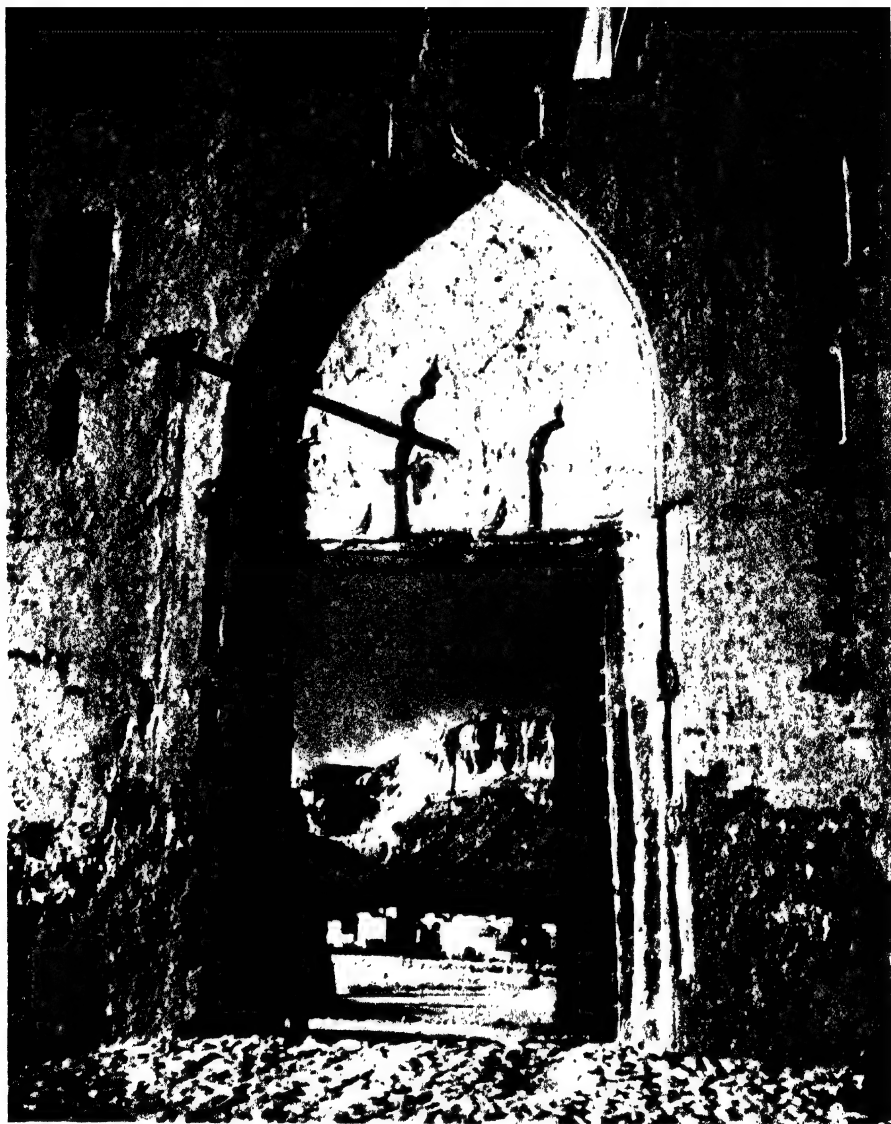
Materially Tarīm seemed to be thriving. But menacing clouds were gathering over her. A second motor road was under construction and would provide much shorter connexion between Mukalla and the Wadi Du'an. The aerodromes were near Mukalla and Saiwūn. But Tarīm,

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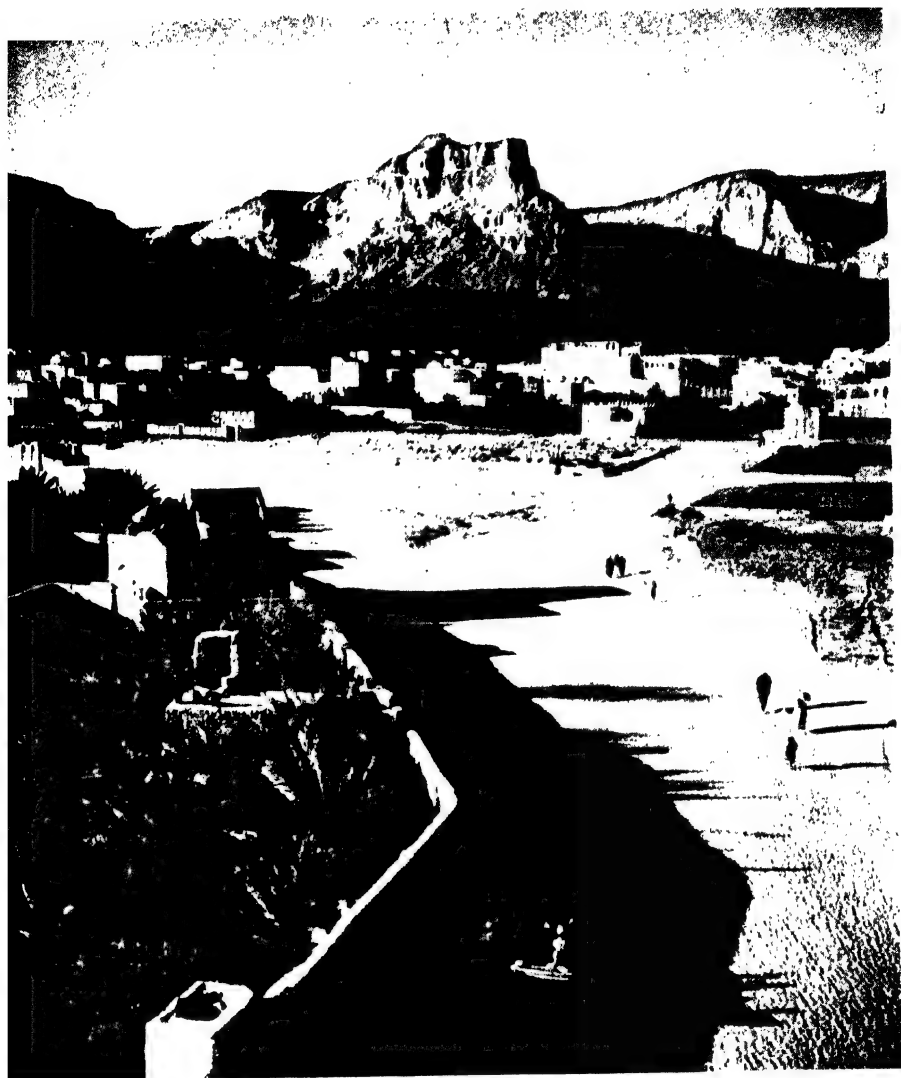
Saiwūn and Mukalla should all be able to look forward to a prosperous future in a new Hadhramaut. They have the strong financial support of their rich sons abroad who have not been forgetful of their native places. Soon these sons will begin to see that their money can find a safe deposit at home. A great change is bound to come when irrigation gets the chief attention and the dams of antiquity are restored. When, instead of only one per cent of the seil being diverted and led to the date-groves, the entire volume of the seil-water is harnessed, the fertile loess soil of the wadi thoroughly saturated and the ground level of the water raised, then the Hadhramaut will see restored the fertility and prosperity it had in Sabæan times.



72. *A corner of the cemetery in the centre of Saiwün.*



73. *The main gate of Tarim.*





75. An 'ishr plant—common to sandy wadis.



76. *The caravan resting in the shade of 'ilb trees at Al Hesna, in the 'Awāmir country.*
 77. *The caravan in Wadi Māder.*



78. *The cemetery of Bir Tamūz, near the meeting of the Wadis Jāri and Mahredūn. Graves of 'Awāmir beduin surround a sacred rock.*
79. *Figures of camel and rider carved on the "desert varnish" of boulders in Wadi Jāri.*



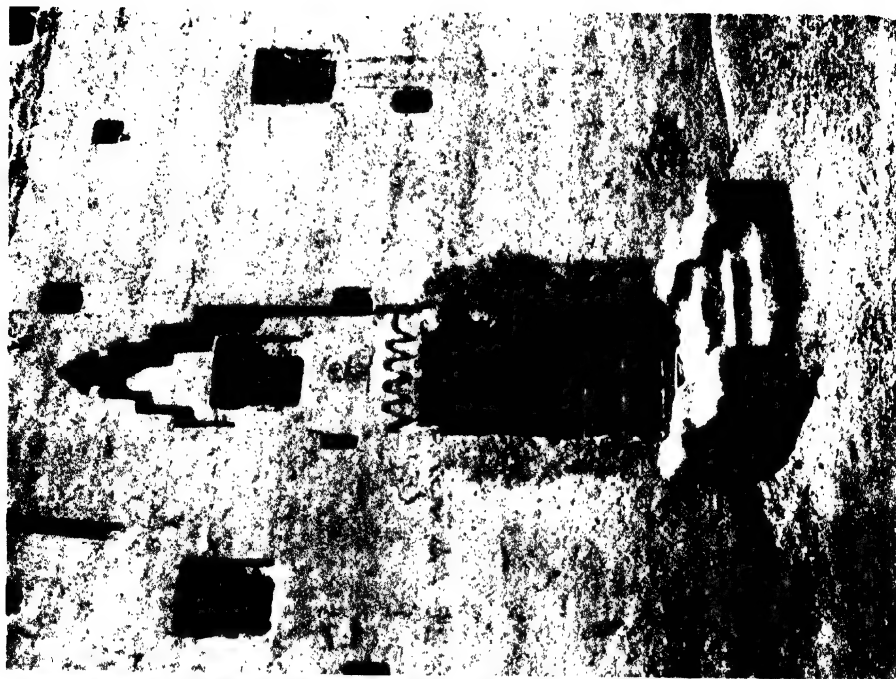
80, 81. *The jōl near Tarīm, dissected by wadi heads.*



82. *Beduin family at breakfast in the 'Awāmīr district.
The hole to their shelter is in the background.*

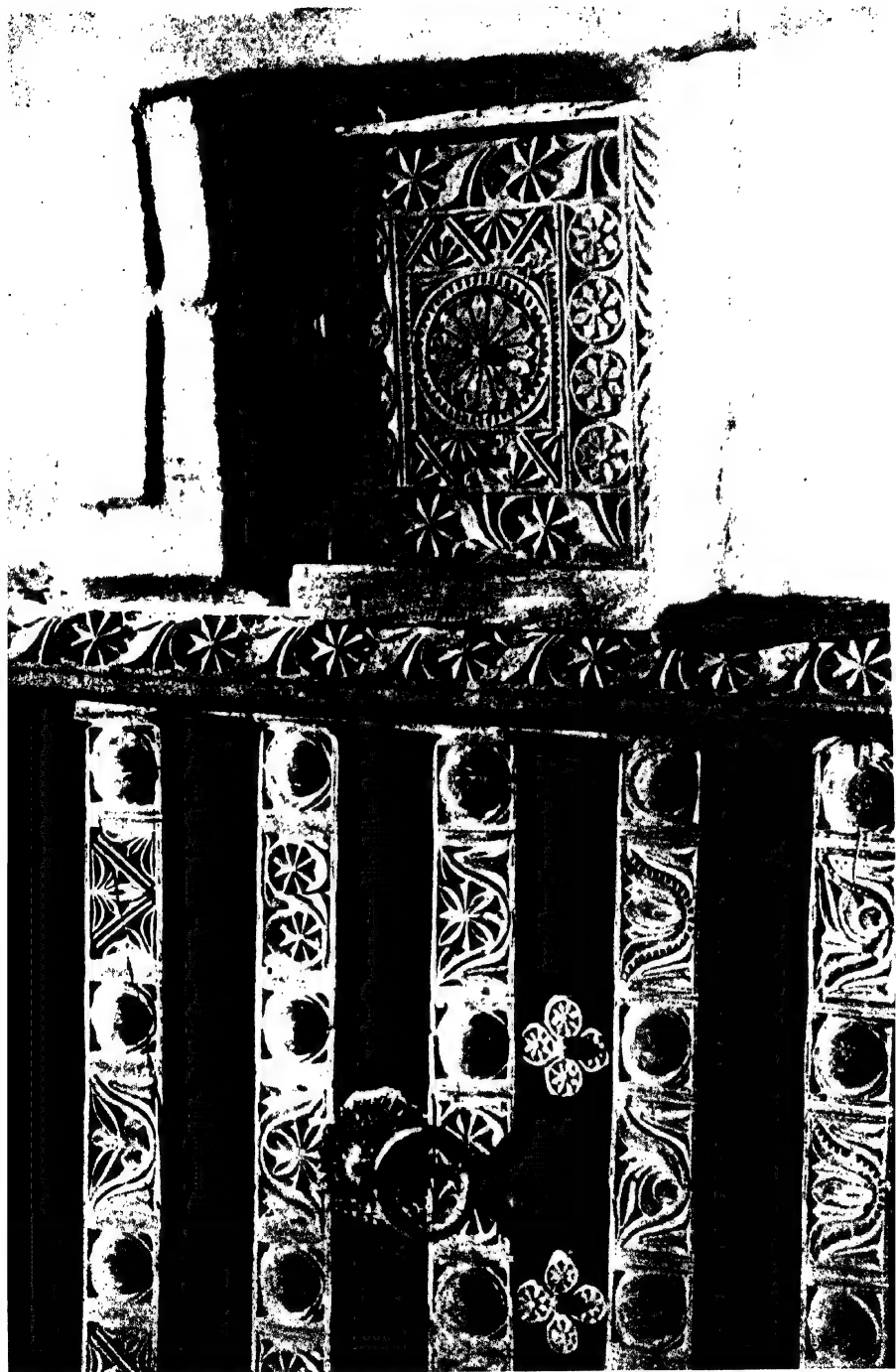


83. 'Ali the guide : one of the Ma 'arra (Humūmi) tribe from Rēdet Ma 'arra.



84. *A doorway in Nisāh.*

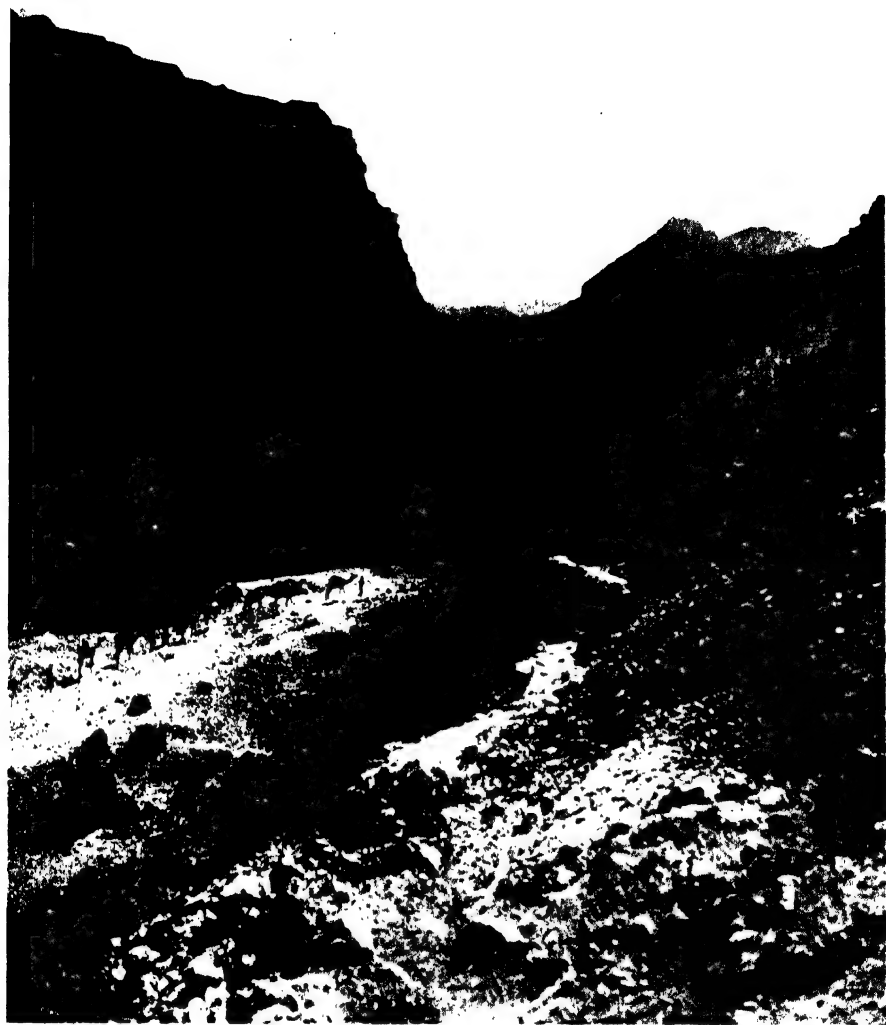
85. *A doorway near Shibām.*



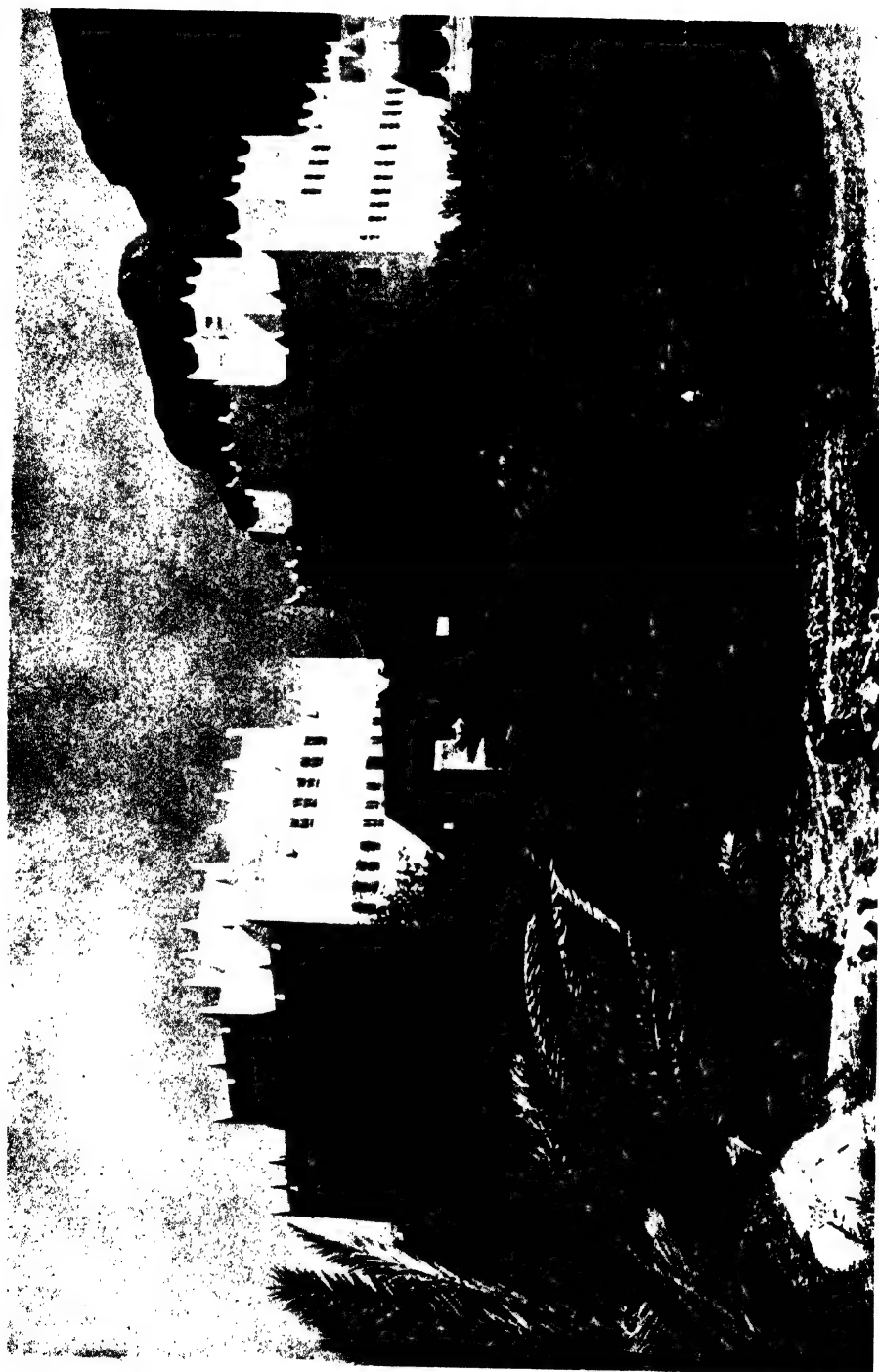
86. Detail of a doorway in Shibām showing a small aperture at the side by means of which the door may be unlocked from the outside.



87. *The solitary Husn al Ghanam in upper
Wadi bin 'Ali on a high bank loess.*



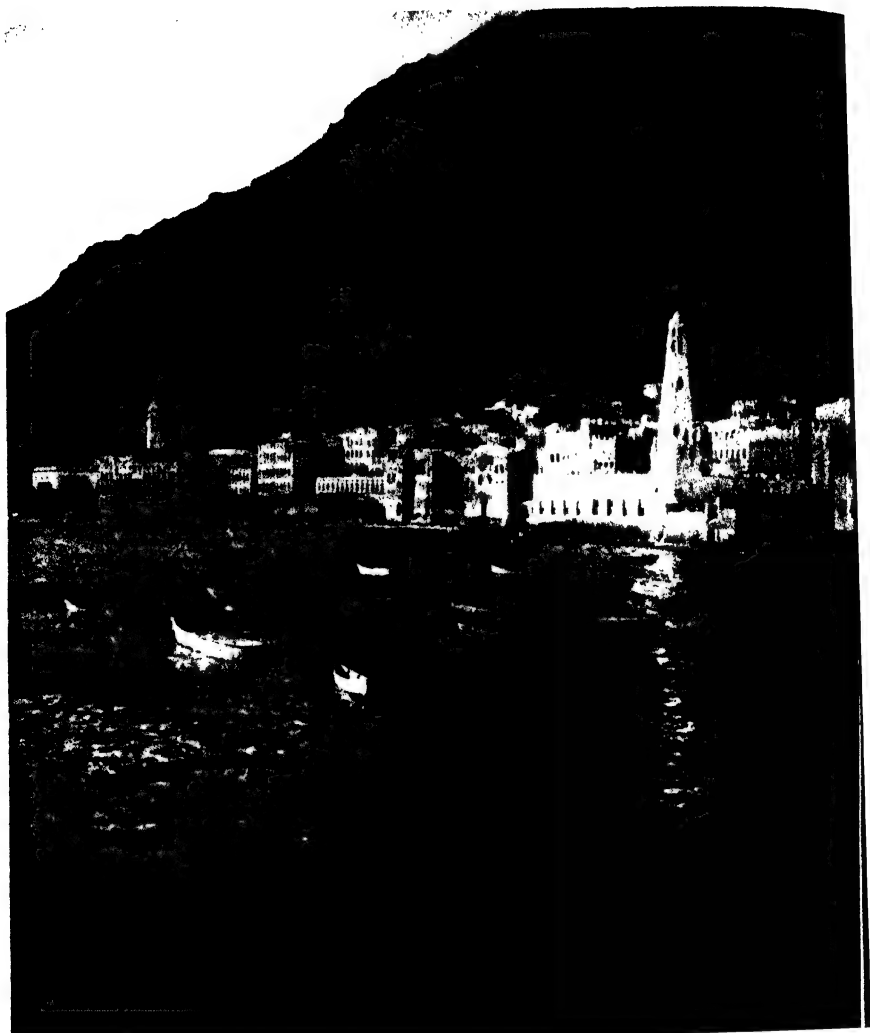
88. *Wadi Huweira. The eocene limestone mountains of el-Qumra (left) and Qarn el Haddā (right). In the background, the Jebel Battih and the Kōr Seibān.*



89. *The houses of Sālim bin Ja'far at Al 'Uqda in the Wadi Hadhramaut.*



90. *The motor road between Mukalla and Al Harshiyāt approaching Gheil Bā Wazīr, the centre of the famous Humūmi tobacco trade.*



91. *The harbour at Mukalla.*

The Northern Jōl

WE discussed our further plans of travel with Sci'id Abu Bakr. He usually had reliable men from several important tribes about him for purposes of liaison and he was himself well informed about tribal matters. Three possibilities were discussed.

First, it would be attractive to make a trip to the great Sci'ari tribe. Their *reida*, or centre of residence, was situated to the north-west. The Sci'aris were known to be wild, war-like people. They had reluctantly submitted to the new order. For them it was not sufficient that the R.A.F. should warn and threaten, real bombs had to be dropped. Much of their tribal region had become known because the preparatory arrangements for such a punitive expedition had involved the taking of a series of air photographs. Ingrams had recently visited their territory and described it.

Then we could also go north-eastward to the country of the Manāhil beduin who were nearly as primitive as the Sci'aris. In their domain lay the Bir Thamūd, an old well, and there or near by was a promise of Himyaritic relics. No European had set his foot here. The name sounded enticing to our ears. Stories of antiquity tell of the people of 'Ād and Thamūd. They were giants to whom the beduin of to-day attribute the buildings and monuments of which they see the ruins that consist of huge blocks of stone. Only giants, people much taller and stronger than living mankind, could have put such colossal stones on top of each other. But the Bāni 'Ād and the Bāni Thamūd must have been great sinners, unbelievers from pre-Islamic times, for Allah had wiped them off the face of the earth by means of tremendous catastrophes in nature. Here we touch on either reminiscences of a flood-story which seem to be common human property or a vague recollection of happenings which caused the downfall of old, civilized kingdoms in Arabia, a tale that has been handed down from generation to generation. The name Thamūd gave us the faint hope that old culture-relics were to be found there. The great distance to this enticing well, however, kept it safe from our inquisitive Western eyes. We

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had not enough time to spare for we did not wish to lose the opportunity of exploring the still unmapped Bin 'Ali route from the Wadi to the coast.

So we decided upon the third proposition which was a trip straight to the north, the shortest way to the Empty Quarter. This would lead us through the territory of the 'Awāmir tribe where no Westerner had preceded us and where, according to beduin reports, there must also be Himyaritic remains.

We could spare twelve days for this trip. The two toughest walkers of our Aden escort, a guide, a camel-driver and we three men would have a shot at crossing the country lying between the Wadi Hadhramaut and the southern border of the Empty Quarter. A minimum of luggage must be taken. Frau von Wissmann would stay behind in Saiwūn and make a visit to Al Meshhed where, exactly at that time, the yearly days of pilgrimage to the tombs of the Seiyids were approaching. Thousands of beduin and many town-dwellers would take part in those religious ceremonies to which a market is connected. Members of the Āl 'Attās family have a spiritual ascendancy in Al Meshhed which derives its significance from the revered tombs over which high, white qubbās had been built.

By Saturday, April 29th, the preparations for our start were complete. In accordance with Arab custom only a small distance was to be covered on the first day. We would cross the wide wadi diagonally in an easterly direction to the entrance of the Wadi Māder and there, at the foot of the 'aqaba to the jōl, pass the night. The caravan with the men left at noon and we followed by car shortly before sunset. We drove across the Saiwūn aerodrome and approached the masīla where, here and there, small pools of water lingered. The water was very bitter and salty to the taste and the banks were covered with a white crust of salt. Date-palms are able to stand much salt if there is abundance of water and they reappeared here after a strip of beach-grass. We went on until we reached the northern wadi-wall which we followed in an easterly direction. Immediately before the village of Bōr we turned northward, entering the Wadi Māder and overtaking our caravan near the entrance to the wadi. We soon passed some tombs arranged around a larger one that is believed to be the last resting-place of the Prophet Handala and is twenty-five yards long. The longer the tomb the greater the importance attached to the person believed to have been buried in it. The tomb of Hūd the Prophet of Allah, six

The Northern Jōl

days' travel by camel to the east, is tens of yards longer than that of Handala. In Jidda, the Red Sea port of Mecca, the tomb of our Mother Eve is 175 yards in length.

After a very little while the car had to stop because the sand was too soft. The caravan caught us up half an hour later. We went on in the moonlight until we reached the foot of a hill on the top of which were said to be some Himyaritic ruins. The hill in question, Al Qarn, is situated strategically in a favourable position for controlling the road from the 'Awāmīr country to the wadi.

Next morning we made an investigation; one fragment of masonry was still standing. For the rest, the hilltop was covered with the stones of walls that had tumbled down, with pieces of the mortar that had been used by the ancients and with potsherds. No inscriptions were found.

The 'aqaba began some distance farther into the Wadi Māder. The climb was a gradual one and did not present any difficulty to the camels. The men of the caravan knew a water-hole in the wadi and made off for it. They soon came back with the *qirab* well filled and our trek across the waterless jōl could begin.

The jōl was of a most deserted and gloomy nature. The contrast with the Wadi Hadhramaut and our garden in Saiwūn made this sterile country look utterly forsaken. We were glad to be on the move again, to see the endless plateau stretching in front of us and to feel the attraction of unknown things that might be hidden behind the flat-topped mountains that barred the horizon. It took time and some effort of will before we could become accustomed to this empty country where not a single plant, much less a stunted acacia, was to be seen. No fodder for the camels and six hours of trekking at a good pace in search of an overhanging rock that would afford a shady spot for the noonday rest. How slowly the tormenting hours passed! Our eyes wandered to the camels and rested on the four full water-bags they carried. They looked frail and very vulnerable with the water clucking softly inside them. The life of a caravan depends on the contents of these skins when one treks through this type of rocky landscape, without water, without shade and without human beings. We often depend, for our life, upon small and fragile things. The four sweating water-bags for eight men on the empty jōl held my thoughts captive.

Shortly before we reached the overhanging rock on which we had fixed for the midday halt Sālih, the camel-driver, had the good fortune to catch

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a *dhabb* (a thorny-tailed lizard) which was looking at us from the top of a distant boulder. They are stupid animals with thick, fat tails covered with spiky horns that make them look more dangerous than they are in reality. Beduin, running, can easily overtake them and turn over the boulders under which they try to hide. They then catch them with a quick grip on the neck and bend head and body forcibly towards each other until the backbone of the reptile breaks with a crack. The hind legs are then paralysed and the *dhabb* will remain sitting quietly on the shoulder of its captor who thus easily carries it to the next halt where it will be a much appreciated dish.

Our first meal on the *jōl* tasted good and consisted of the familiar *chupatti* baked in oil of sesame and a handful of the best obtainable *Saiwūn* dates, given us by *Seiyid Abu Bakr*. The *dhabb* was then roasted in the hot ashes of the fire. Its fat body was cut open and spitted with small sticks. The flesh was whitish in colour. This delicacy was displayed to us with the kind offer: "Would you like a bite, *yā Harmal*? *yā Wasi*? *yā Vander*?" One ought to have the courage to try everything once so as to be able to give an opinion on it. We looked at the sadly-mutilated reptile and reluctantly said that we should like to try. Then the glowing ashes were blown into new life and the morsel put to cook. The horny spikes on the tail burned away with a hiss and spread such a revolting stench that even the last pieces of *chupatti* stuck in our throats. When, finally, the *dhabb* was roasted only *Harmal* had the courage to taste it. He declared, to the great satisfaction of the men, that it tasted fine. They licked their fingers in anticipation.

It was a long time before the caravan got on the move again; the camels had found some vegetation in a deep ravine and, searching for more, had strayed far away. The olfactory senses which lead the camel to sparse bits of vegetation at remote distances must be remarkably sharp. When the *jammāl* (the camel-driver) at last returned with his beasts he was carrying a bundle of green stuff which he gave the camels to chew as they lay in a circle being loaded. Much care was taken to keep our transport in good condition.

During the long afternoon trek we saw only one single man. Sitting on his camel he rode through the empty land. The guide 'Ali ran ahead to talk to him and eventually brought him to us. He was a generous soul and presented us with a rag full of dried *dōm* fruit. As darkness began to fall we saw, silhouetted against the evening sky, the figures of three camels

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led by a man, passing in the distance. That was all, and we were alone again.

We halted for the night near the head of a small wadi. Our beduin always choose this type of place for their bivouac. They would push on for hours to reach such a place, because they would probably find there some bushes that would provide firewood for cooking the evening meal. The camels were let loose in the wadi down which they wandered, guided by their sharp scent, to some possible vegetation. Next morning we had proof that the vegetation was very scanty in the number of hours it took Sālih to recover his animals. This was a set-back. We had risen at four o'clock in order to be ready to start at five. Hermann had gone off alone with the guide 'Ali to begin his difficult and laborious task of mapping. It was six o'clock before Sālih appeared on the horizon with his camels.

At this rate we should not advance quickly enough. We had got seven camels instead of the five we had ordered: three were strong, fully grown animals, the other four were merely calves. One frolicked about without a load, following its mother, the other small ones were only just learning to carry burdens. The inclusion of animals under training would only be accepted by foreigners. They had no knowledge about camels and would accept it. We had paid fifty Maria Theresa dollars for the whole northerly trip and any additional gratuity would depend upon the service given. All the men were tough walkers, bright, and of a kindly disposition that gave promise of our overcoming all difficulties.

On the first of May we trekked further to the north, in the best of moods and in the anticipation of seeing more fertile land, for we were approaching the places where the 'Awāmir tribe lived with their flocks. The landscape did improve a little, but we were nevertheless impressed by the pitiful conditions under which mankind sometimes has to fight for bare existence. Many doubtless maintain themselves in hopelessly poor country supported by the desire to live their own lives and be free and independent of others. One's own country is the dearest on earth, be it bare and dry and barren! We went on further, searching for human beings and for ruins or other remains of that higher civilization that seems to have been able to exist here on the border of the Empty Quarter.

At Jizal Bāl Raiyis we halted for the midday rest. Now, in fact, more signs of life appeared. We saw a gazelle fleeing in the distance. Later on we met a caravan of four camels and with it two men, an old woman

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and two small children. Then we passed two square mud-built houses or fortresses which here also are called *husūn*. In the distance we spotted more of these square towers that form excellent landmarks in this featureless land. It looked as if we were approaching the inhabited 'Awāmir world. On the *jōl* we came across a piece of man's handiwork: two small dykes several miles long which had been built to catch rain-water and to lead it towards the wide wadi with low sides on whose western border the *husūn* were standing.

At about ten o'clock we descended into the Wadi Howēra where there was water and we could refill our water-bags. Probably by nightfall we should again be far away from water. The camels had not drunk since we left Saiwūn. They could go longer without water and so to-day, too, would have to forget their thirst. In the wadi where we halted they could at least find thorn bushes on which to browse.

When we had started again we saw a change come gradually over the landscape. The plains became smaller, the flat-topped mountains increased in number and drew closer together. The path now led through rocky valleys, then through wide wadis, then climbed up the gently-sloping flanks of low mountains.

That afternoon we saw a remarkable monument, probably of Himyaritic origin. Our Arab companions called it "Shughl al Kuffār", work of the unbelievers. In two, long, parallel rows fifty yards apart, groups of three big slabs of stone forming together small pyramids had been set up at regular intervals. Some of the groups had a covering stone on the top. The distance between the small pyramids was a little more than a yard. Seven on one side and ten on the opposite side they stood in two rows on a platform that was raised above the surrounding country and had a border of stones arranged along it. The two lines of pyramids were grouped in three series. In the wide lane between the two parallel rows of small pyramids were rings of stones, placed so close together as to touch each other, the spaces within the rings being filled with smaller stones, all of the same blue-green colour. These rings were themselves arranged in two rows parallel to the rows of pyramids leaving a wide path in the centre.

The whole monument was laid out on a platform alongside the path through the wadi but at a level that was several yards higher than ground-level. It was situated at the foot of a flat-topped mountain that was surmounted by two square structures of stone erected without mortar.

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These may have been guard-posts or even landmarks pointing out the place of the monument to distant travellers. The three separate parts seemed to belong to each other. What was the meaning of this group? We could not make it out. The possibility of its being a burial-place presented itself but the ground was solid rock and gave no indication of holes having been cut in it. The pyramids themselves were too small to contain human bodies. The monument was different in exterior form from those we had seen on our way to the Hadhramaut. Some of those, too, had consisted of stones placed in circles within which were small white, red or blue stones. But each one of these circles had been connected by a narrow stone-paved path with a large rectangle of big, vertical slabs of stone. The rows of small pyramids which we saw here were something quite new. It was remarkable, too, that close by we passed another similar monument, this time a smaller one. Later on we saw some more. Then a large piece of limestone with a flattish top lay at the roadside. Weathered, but recognizable, Himyaritic characters were cut in it. Our companions pretended that the place of real antiquity was still ahead. Experience had taught us, however, to distrust such stories. Beduin, and especially those who call themselves Moslems, pay little attention or respect to structures or inscriptions left behind by "unbelieving" ancestors. Still, their stories excited us and drove us on along our lonely, tiring path at greater speed and for longer hours.

By nightfall we had reached Al Hidabiya where there was nothing but the rock floor to sleep on. We cleared a few square yards of stones so that we could spread our mattresses for the night's rest. How simple it was travelling with so small a number of men and such little luggage!

On May 2nd we discussed together our water problem before setting off. The country here showed signs of vegetation and of more inhabitants. Our guide expected to reach water in a few hours. So long as uncertainty remained we had to be very economical with the small quantity of water we had left. Our path now followed a sandy wadi-bed with the blessed sight of green bushes around us. And then, thank God, we saw men and animals; first the white and black dots of flocks of sheep and goats and then camels grazing. In the distance a woman was coming towards us with a curious head-covering. Sālih, the cameleer, who was at home here, went to meet her. She was a shepherdess and carried, like a steel helmet on top of the rag covering

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her black curls, a pot in which she was going to collect the milk of her flock.

Date-palms were growing in the wadi. An old negro, most probably a slave, was busy turning over the soil around the palms. He said he did it in the hope that the trees would produce shoots. The palms were poorly tended and only a few were bearing fruit. Some dōm-palms, a couple of 'ilb trees, stripped to the trunk and of course without fruit, together with some nashr palm trees made up this 'Awāmir oasis. The beduin here lived partly in primitive houses, partly in grottos under overhanging rocks. The grottos were closed off by walls of stones loosely piled on top of each other. The houses stood together above the wadi on the rocky slope. Primitive and clumsy square towers protected the houses that huddled around them. These precursors of castles had a lower part made of piled-up stones and an upper part of mud. The houses were of piled stones only although some of them were covered with branches supporting a roof of loam. Man and beast lived together in these houses and grottos.

This 'Awāmir settlement still had the stamp of war and plunder impressed on it. The soil and its water supply did not generally provide adequate means of existence so the inhabitants tried to improve their standard of living by robbing. The result was that agriculture was neglected in favour of raising cattle because flocks could be moved away and hidden for short times. Even so, these weak tribes suffered bitterly at the hands of plundering neighbours and had nearly died out. Thus these dry lands became ever poorer and emptier. The bombs from British planes that burst over the rcida (the central settlement) of the strong neighbouring tribe of the Sei'aris, must have sounded like a message of hope to the much weaker 'Awāmir. Peace had now spread over these wadis, none of the men we saw carried a rifle: these weapons had suddenly dropped in price, the proof of which we were soon to see.

Near this settlement there must be, and in fact there was, water. A high dam had been built, closing off an inward bend of the wadi-wall and thus cleverly making a deep reservoir. Rain-water from a wide stretch of the jōl drained into it and was stored there. These water reservoirs they called *kharif*. If the one here contained water, there was, we argued, good hope of others in the same region. Four bēduin girls were busy watering their sheep and goats. The animals were small, perhaps because of the scarcity of fodder thereabouts. Water is here highly valued and

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the camels are not allowed to drink of the first-class water. A little farther ahead was the place for them. Even there we had to fill the qirab, then pour the water from the qirab into our aluminium cooking pot out of which the camels drank one after the other. The quantity they stowed away was amazing. In the afternoon we should pass one more reservoir, and then for one day and a half and one night we should find no water until we arrived at the goal of the trip, the famous Bir Tamīz.

We halted for the midday rest at Al Hesna on a sultry patch of ground where some tall and unspoilt 'ilb trees afforded a sun-pierced shade and where some groups of date-palms grew. When the rains were abundant even dhura was grown here. This was the most attractive place we had as yet seen in the 'Awāmir country. Ahead lay a barren, rocky waste. Nothing of interest seemed to await us there but we had one experience worth mentioning. For the first time during all our travels in South Arabia we crossed the watershed between south-west and north-east. The line of demarcation was not a conspicuous one but to the northward there was a prospect of vast, distant regions where there seemed to be more life and movement because the jōl was cut up by an increasing number of wadis. All the wadis now ran in a northerly direction; any rain that falls, however little it may be, drains off to the north, to the "Whirling (sand-)Sea" (Al Bahr as Sāfi). That is, no doubt, a desolate country, a place of despair for him who loses his way in it, and soon finds himself without water. The people born here are quite content and happy and feel absolutely safe. Thus, for instance, a little boy who had joined our caravan and in the afternoon said good-bye taking two camel calves with him. He went to the place where, in the invisible, far distance, his people were living. His mother would be there. With a happy smile on his brave little face he took leave of us and counted on being home by nightfall. He led the two young camels on a cord. He had no food, no water, both he could find in the family grotto but on the way there he must do without. So he set off into the vast emptiness. This was his world and he was convinced that it was a good and beautiful one.

We passed another Himyaritic monument of the type already described. Our night bivouac, the last before the Bir Tamīz, was made in the Wadi Jāri. We were in a mood of subdued anticipation. We felt the satisfaction of being sure now that our effort had not been in vain and that we were close to our goal. The beduin were inclined to heighten that mood by telling fantastic stories about other relics of the Bāni 'Ād that we could see

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if only we were not such curious hurriers-on, such accursed Nasārā, who did not understand the wisdom of the True Believers that "patience is from the All Merciful but haste from Satan". Stretched out on his mattress each one of us conjured up for himself an idea of what the morrow would bring. Cool caution warned us that desert discoveries were usually deceptions. But sometimes there were surprises. Neither mattered much so long as the mysterious call of the unknown did not fail us. In the Wadi Jāri we again heard it and listened gladly.

Bir Tamiz

SOON we were trekking on through the Wadi Jāri. We had already spent one day following this wadi. Its walls were high and the scil-bed was not wide although many tributary wadis joined it. After rain much water must flow through it, rich vegetation on the sand and loam-hills pointed to that. Some groups of dōm-palms embellished the landscape. The *nashr* (dwarf-palm) abounded and whole clusters were in flower. According to Hermann its species had not yet been determined because no one had yet laid hand on its flowers. This we were doing now. Tall, ramified flower-stems, covered with tiny flowers, reached out above the dwarf-palms.

In the wadi-walls were many abandoned beduin grotto-dwellings. The people were now in the plains with their cattle; later in the year they would return to seek protection from the cool nights in the oblong, shallow caves that they had closed off from the wadi with loosely-piled stone walls. At the confluence of two wadis lay a great cemetery. Muhsin supposed that an epidemic had caused the people to flee in terror after having buried their dead. But he did not know the habits of life on the border of the Empty Quarter. Wasi discovered that here for the first time since we had left the Wadi Hadhramaut we were in a country where the sandstone strata come to the surface.

The night in the Wadi Jāri was the first we had had with mosquitos. Wherever there is vegetation these insects seem to find enough humidity to breed and to protect themselves against the hot, dry wind.

Along the path there were big limestone boulders covered with the black-brown shiny coating that gives the stones that lie on the jōl or against the mountain-slopes their monotonously sombre hue and is scientifically denoted by the term "desert varnish" (Wüstenlack). Marks and figures had been cut in that dark lacquer. As some Himyaritic characters were recognizable we felt safe in drawing the conclusion that it was pre-Islamic work. Some of the boulders were decorated with small circles and drawings of animals, possibly the work of children or shepherds. We could see

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that the stones were not part of structures as only the upturned faces had been decorated. It was clear that passers-by finding that the stones that lay alongside the path had flat top-faces had used them to satisfy their urge to give graphic expression to their feelings or ideas. At several points we saw these inscriptions on boulders lying not far from our path. This proved that we were nearing a spot which in ancient times must have been a place of assembly. Now, however, complete silence reigned and no human being was to be seen. Then, unexpectedly, we came to a place where men must have been recently and in great numbers. It was the last resting-place of those wanderers through the borders of the Empty Quarter whose earthly journey had finally come to an end. The companions of their long wanderings seem to have wished to leave them behind well-cared-for. On a flat stretch of the bank, still in the wadi, but at a safe height above the seil level, the great 'Awāmir cemetery lies, the "Maqbara Bir Tamīz" (cemetery of Bir Tamīz). It was close to the junction of the Wadi Jāri and the Wadi Mahredūn. A huge piece of rock that had fallen down from the wadi-wall formed its centre and close to that rock lay the biggest and most carefully composed tombs. Each had two slabs of stone set upright, one at the head and one at the foot, in accordance with the practice of Islam all over the world. Further away from the rock were oblong piles of stones, the tombs of the poor, of which there must have been many more than a hundred. The perpendicular front of the rock was full of holes and had been used as a depository for offerings. Into these cavities formed by nature in the porous limestone rock wooden pegs had been driven. Old rifles had also been used and the barrels hammered into the rock. We saw here round eating-mats, bags woven from the leaves of the nashir-palm and dried skins that had been used as water-bags. A bottle swayed to and fro in the breeze. Fragments of camel saddles and even some empty kerosene tins in plaited baskets had found their way here. We counted at least ten rifles, arms which until recently had been the most costly and valued possession of the beduin. A beduin cradle stood leaning against a smaller rock. It was of the practical carrying type that the beduin mother takes with her everywhere, pressed closely to her hip and some sad mother must have left this cradle of her little one near its grave. Her spell of maternal happiness had been short; the hard, never-ending wandering with the flocks had to start again and there was no point in carrying an object that had become superfluous.

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The explanation given by our companions of this hanging on the rock-wall of beduin objects of value, was favourable to Moslems. They said that this was a place where *walis* (saintly people) lay buried and that the beduin who starts on a long journey leaves his weapons and those household articles he can spare in such a place convinced that nobody will dare to intrude and rob here. We could not help thinking of old beduin animistic practices of bestowing gifts upon the dead, or upon their ghosts, at their resting-place. The fact that so many rifles had been left here was a proof that they had become unnecessary, had lost their value and were no longer worth dragging along. The peace of Ingrams had made its influence felt unto the borderland of the Empty Quarter.

A few hundred yards from the confluence of the Wadi Jāri with the Wadi Mahredūn and about 800 yards above sea level lay the Bir Tamīz. A very remarkable well it was, lying in the sandy bed of the wadi, close to the steep and high-rock wall. What we had been told, and could not believe, was indeed true: the water of this well was only a few *qāmas* below the bottom of the wadi. This does not mean that the ground-water level is close to the surface, for Bir Tamīz, to our great astonishment and deception, was not a well, but a reservoir. Under a thin layer of sand in the wadi lies massive rock. Bir Tamīz was a hole in this rocky bottom, a cistern made by the hand of nature, not of man. Allah was its creator. A hole or a short tunnel with irregular walls connected it with the seil-bed. How is it to be explained that the bir is not filled with sand when a seil flows through the wadi and water rushes in? We could not understand. Was the sand dug out of the rocky cellar at regular intervals? Nobody could tell us. The bir must have been in use for a very long time for the ropes for raising the water-bags had worn many deep ruts in the sides of the tunnel. The water that was visible from where we stood seemed to be greenish-brown; air bubbles kept coming to the surface and lots of tadpoles were swimming in the sombre liquid. That is the drawback of all water collected and stored in basins, cisterns or natural rocky clefts. It is always smelly, often revolting. This is inevitably the case where flocks come regularly to drink and where no protecting wall is built around the mouth of the well. The surroundings of the Arabian watering-places are always saturated with urine and covered with a layer of caked excrement. The stagnant water becomes more and more polluted and deteriorates in smell and taste. Even our 'Awāmir companions seemed to dislike the Bir Tamīz water though their words

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praised it. We still had two qirab full of water and that would be sufficient for the noon meal and until the evening. Our cameleers took the risk of leaving the famous bir without polluting our waterbags with its foul brew. That meant, however, that we must reach the first water-station on our way back before nightfall. After that would follow a long stretch without water.

We took our midday meal close to the bir in the shade of an overhanging rock. We had to confess ourselves a little baffled because of the bir and also because the landscape had altered so little. We were surrounded by the same desolate land as that through which we had been trekking. The plateau gradually sloped away and the wadis were less deep and narrower but more numerous. Vegetation was still scarce. Notwithstanding the terrific heat of the noonday sun Hermann and Wasi decided to climb the highest part of the wadi-wall so as to look over as much country as possible and to take some bearings.

It was proved to us that there was no mountain ridge between the Wadi Hadhramaut and the southern borders of the Empty Quarter. R.A.F. officers who had told Hermann in 1930 that they thought they had seen a high range of mountains through hazy sand dust had erred. We had expected as much. The jōl slowly sank away to the north without showing any outstanding characteristics. The Empty Quarter had no marked frontier to its south; we probably were still a good distance away from the gradual transition of a fully cut-up jōl into a region of sand dunes. Hermann's map will show this and remove from pilots flying over this country during a sandstorm all fear of crashing into a high mountain range.

The Empty Quarter has been explored by three well-known travellers in Arabia. Bertram Thomas was the first who managed to cross this territory that had so long guarded its mysteries. He raced through it in an almost straight line, starting in Dhufār on the south coast and emerging from the desert at Dōha on the Persian Gulf. That was in 1931. He described his exploit, which he prepared for through many years and then executed with daring and dash, in his book *Arabia Felix*. A good year later Philby got his chance. He travelled as the leader of the first geographic expedition sent out by King Ibn Sa'ūd. Thanks to this royal assistance he was able to travel in a leisurely and ordered manner and explore the central part of the Rub' al Khālī. He started from the north, travelling at first closely parallel to Bertram Thomas' route, then made a big loop in the centre and went westward leaving the Empty Quarter at its north-

western border. He published his maps and his extensive material in 1933 in his book *The Empty Quarter*. Major Cheesman was the forerunner of these two; nearly ten years earlier he had travelled in the north-eastern border territory. He gave a description of his experiences in his book, that was published in 1924, *In Unknown Arabia*. Some years after his first great trip in the Empty Quarter Philby made another long journey during which he travelled through the south-west border zone of the Rub' al Khālī. This trip too was mapped—and described. His book on it appeared in 1939 as *Sheba's Daughters*.

To all this important work a tiny bit of mapping along the southern border may be added by Hermann. Unknown Arabia, of which Major Cheesman had full right to speak in 1924, gradually becomes smaller and smaller. In particular the Empty Quarter has been lifted out of the realm of mystery and fantastic stories into the light of exact knowledge. The number of problems that call for investigation has not sensibly diminished but they are now of a different kind. They are no longer exclusively concerned with fantasy. Stories of singing sands, of the ruins of buried towns and the dangers of quicksands into which a measuring line disappeared without reaching solid bottom, as told by von Wrede¹ have lost their awe and wonder. Some have been explained scientifically, some proved to be nonsense. But every exploration has hit upon fresh problems. Perhaps the most engrossing are those which deal with the former history of this region, its geology, geography and ethnology.

We had reached our most northerly limit. Longingly our glances travelled to the far horizon which disclosed nothing of what was behind it. We looked out over an endless, monotonous rocky plain. Close by, the twisting wadis were visible as they cut out in the plain their steep, crumbling rifts. Farther away was a mutilated plain on the shiny stone-surface of which the noonday sun beat mercilessly. Low, flat-topped mountain-ridges could be easily distinguished. In the distance, standing out in endlessly repeated similar forms, they merged insolubly into the plateau. That was what we saw to the north.

Then, forced by lack of time, we resolutely decided to turn our backs on the Empty Quarter on whose inner border the 'Awāmir beduin were

¹ A. von Wrede, *Reise in Hadhrāmaut, Beled Beny Yssā and Beled al Hadschar*, herausgegeben von H. Freiherr von Maltzahn, Braunschweig, 1870. The above-mentioned passage can also be found complete in R. H. Kiernan's *The Unveiling of Arabia*, London, G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., pp. 208-209.

Bir Tamīz

then wandering with their flocks in search of grazing. We turned to the south and looked out over the unvarying scene. Our impetus was gone and we walked painfully in the numbing heat of noon. So as not to return by the same path we set our course on Tarīm. There was a chance that we might see something new and our guide pretended that we should shorten the trip on the jōl by one day. Soon the caravan was moving at its former pace. In order to be quite sure I again investigated the position of our drinking water. Could we depend on finding water at nightfall? 'Alī the guide reconsidered the possibility with Sālih the cameleer. No, neither was quite sure and after a heated discussion they came to the conclusion that we could not go on without a supply of stinking water from the Bir Tamīz. They felt guilty for their reckless omission and accepted the hard consequences without grumbling. With one camel they trotted back over the long stretch of road we had already covered after leaving the bir. Alone with the other camels we ventured on. It was some hours before they caught up with us again.

Alongside the path we spotted some boulders with scratchings and figures chiselled in their coat of desert-varnish. These were primitive utterances that could be photographed. No photography was possible of rows of similar scribble-scrabbles of an arrow motif (↑ ↑ ↑) high up against the wadi-wall cut into a stratum of black-brown rock. Here again we passed Himyaritic monuments consisting of small, stone pyramids set up in rows.

Our camp for the night was pitched on a high and flat part of the bank of the Wadi Mahredūn that we had been following the greater part of the afternoon. It would have been better if we had climbed on to the higher jōl. For down in the wadi the wind dropped early in the night: the heat, radiated from the surrounding rocky wall, at once became oppressive and soon small sand-flies, approaching noiselessly, made themselves felt by their virulent bites. We learnt once and for all that the jōl is an ideal place for passing the night, at least in summer-time.

With the approach of morning a wind arose that stirred up clouds of dust but drove away the mosquitos and sand-flies and brought with it a welcome coolness. At dawn the light was sad and grey in the dust-filled atmosphere. The caravan soon set off at a firm pace. During the course of the morning one lonely beduin woman came in our direction. She told us that she was looking for pasture for her flock. Talking with our Awāmīr companions she accompanied us until she had rejoined her goats

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which were fine, well-fed animals, tall and sleek in their shining, black coats.

We saw ruins of fortifications on the high edge of the wadi where it was wide and much vegetation grew. So this was a place where men and cattle had had to be defended. We had already been six hours on the march and still the much-desired water had not been found. One of us ran ahead with the guide to look over the edges of the wadis we came across. At long last the guide spotted the water. We dashed forward each trying to reach it before the other but then shrank back from what we saw. It was a pool of drained rain-water and it seemed to have been standing for a long time. The acacia bushes that surrounded it formed a refreshing picture in this scorched country of rocks. But the pool was encircled by a layer of goat and camel dung and a penetrating smell of urine hovered over it. The water was green and covered with a sheet of camel droppings that had swollen in the water till they were like mellow plums. The guide knelt on the edge and with prudent motions of his hand freed a place of the floating plums, then scooped out some of the brown-green water in the hollow of his hand and tasted it attentively. He repeated this operation several times. Then after sighing an "al-hamdu lillāh" (praise to Allah) he looked up into our anxious faces and said: "It is fine water." "It is no water," we replied, "it is diluted urine and a brew of dung." The camels were brought. They sniffed at it and wavered, then for them too the dirt floating on the surface was brushed aside and they drank some mouthfuls and turned away. Although nearly perishing of thirst we neither dared nor could drink this water. Some of it was put into a kettle, a handful of tea added and then boiled. We sat down unable to take our eyes away from it so eager were we to quench our thirst. Pieces of canvas were spread with our blankets over the acacia bushes to give us sufficient shade as we sat and waited. It was very warm. Speechless we stared at the floating dung, inhaling its stench. Our companions were very cheerful: they were looking forward to a treat, for Muhsin had had the good luck to catch a promisingly fat dhabb and a fine dish that would be! Muhsin was proud to be photographed with his hunting trophy trustfully clinging to his arm. Soon the reck of the roasting dhabb mingled with the heavy smell of the stagnant water. We tried to stay up-wind.

The heat drove us on again after a little rest. We were feeling sick after the disgusting tea and walking over the jōl was better than sitting still

in the heat. That evening we were tired and pitched an early camp above the Wadi 'Eshera. Tinned soup and chocolate could not kill the taste of that water so we sought consolation and forgetfulness in sleep. A strong breeze was blowing. I awoke from a light doze and saw Hermann standing in the moonlight busy spreading one of his own blankets over me. I feigned sleep which in fact soon came over me again. Such quiet acts of friendship, such considerate thoughts each for the other, were the strength of our joint undertaking.

Next morning the tea was again qucer and the porridge mixed with dates had a strange taste. Only the biscuits were pure. They were of a genuine Dutch brand that Seiyid Abu Bakr had given us. We shared the last of them all round in brotherly fashion for the camel-men and soldiers liked them very much.

Before long we reached a wide wadi where black and white specks between the green vegetation betrayed the presence of flocks of goats and sheep. Sālih, the cameleer, left the caravan to negotiate the purchase of a goat. We went on until we hit upon a water-hole over a yard and a half deep in the sandy bottom of the wadi. The sides of the hole had been strengthened with stones and tufts of grass and at the bottom we found clear water. What a delicious sight it was! At the brim lay a tin drinking mug with which we cautiously filled one water-skin after another. While our men were occupied with this work of patience two women with a little girl came to fetch water. One wore a silver girdle, a bracelet and a necklace of big, yellow lumps of beads. The little girl was so startled at seeing foreigners that she began to weep loudly. The much-beaded mother consoled the child by softly tapping on its head.

This was the first well with living water that we had seen in the 'Awāmir country. The water was close to the surface but nobody had taken the trouble to bring it permanently within easy reach by building a good wall round it. Spring-water was so rare that the people did not seem to realize its superior virtues; or perhaps they preferred the blessing of rain-water that fell straight from heaven.

At Siyeh Ya'bān we stopped for the night. We had reached the highest plateau of the way back, some 3,000 feet in altitude, and were approaching the watershed. It was good sleeping on the wide plain. The breeze was mild so that we did not feel cold in a temperature falling to 15.6° Centigrade.

The region of wide, sandy wadis through which we had trekked the

previous day was probably the most populated part of the 'Awāmīr land. At least seven husūn were visible in the distance, every one of them protecting a cluster of low, square houses. Many paths crossed ours and several times we saw a woman with some children guarding a flock.

For yet another day we trekked over the jōl. Sālih said that he knew a place with good water not far off our route. So he divided the burden of one of our camels among the others and, leading the animal with a rope, marched quickly towards the water carrying the empty qirab on his shoulder. The caravan went on but I followed Sālih as I wanted to see where he got his water. I did not regret my decision. At first there was nothing to be seen but the stony jōl. Then we reached a wadi with many green bushes and small islets of grass. Soon we could see black and white specks of flocks, the bigger black dots being the shepherdesses in their inevitable black garments. Sālih knew this wadi well. It had recently had abundant rain and a beautiful pool of fresh water lay shining amidst the fresh, green bushes and grass. A man and some women came along for a talk with Sālih as he stepped into the pond to fill his water-bags. With the fingers of one hand he kept open the narrow neck of the stiffly-dried water-bag while with the other hand he swept small waves of water into it. Here was an entirely unexpected desert idyll. The people had no fear because I was alone and Sālih was their friend. As soon as the water-bags, bulging with their precious contents, had been loaded on top of the camel we followed the women to the family dwelling-place. Under an overhanging rock a stable had been made for the young and still delicate goats. The people themselves lived in front of the stable on a flat piece of rock. At night-time the starlit sky was their roof and during the day, when the heat of the sun burned fiercely, they spanned a woven cloth of black goats'-hair over some sticks. When we approached their home the family was still gathered in the morning sun around the remains of their breakfast. There were two elderly men, two women, a grown-up son and two children. Some goat's milk and buttermilk had been left in wooden bowls. I was cordially invited to join them and gladly I accepted a long drink. How good it tasted! One of the men seemed to know something of the outside world for he had been in the Wadi Hadhramaut. There he had heard stories of the country where the Hadhramis used to go and get their wealth and he could vaguely understand that a man from that country had come to see their homeland. The others listened with astonishment and awe to the worldly wisdom of the man who probably

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was the family father. I distributed among the children the biscuits I had left in my pocket. They kept them prudently in their little hands and only dared to taste the unknown food when their parents had answered their questioning looks with an affirmative nod. The men did not smoke. The family practically lived on its flock. Occasionally they got some dates or flour but the principal food of both adults and children was milk, white cheese and the indispensable bitter coffee from an earthen jar. I was, of course, offered this Arabian drink of hospitality but I far preferred the buttermilk.

We returned at a jog-trot to the caravan which had hurried on in the direction of Tarîm. They had covered a good distance and 'Ali the guide said that there was a chance of our reaching the Wadi Hadhramaut the following afternoon. Our march over the jöl was more lively now that we were passing so many wadi-heads that opened up views through the wadi-beds and over their bordering plateaux, both forming wide gaps between the flat-topped mountains to a far horizon.

It proved too hot to rest at noon in a fissure of rock and as all were eager to go as far as possible before darkness set in we loaded the camels again and moved off into the silent heat of the afternoon. From time to time we cast our looks sideways to our ever-lengthening shadows. Everyone walked as quickly as he could and so we became more and more separated. When at last the evening fell we still went on hoping to find a place with food for the camels and fuel for our evening meal. Our search was in vain for the wide border zone of the jöl, which we were now approaching, is usually its barest part. I had to go back in the darkness with a lantern and a water-bag to meet Hermann who, together with 'Ali the guide, had not been able to keep up with the rest of the caravan because he was making his route-map. Muhsin, the tough and imperturbable commander of our escort, was so tired that evening that for the first time in our long weeks of wandering he reproached me for hurrying. The question of drinking-water caused us some anxiety. That night we had a small ration each and then had to try and reach Tarîm next day with only one bottle of water between us.

We started next morning quietly determined to press on quickly. The main caravan travelled at a moderate pace south-westward setting its course straight for Saiwün. We, with 'Ali the guide, cut cross-country in the direction where we thought the headland, at the foot of which Tarîm lay, must be. 'Ali claimed that, marching quickly, we could be there in two

hours. With our single dram-flask we stumbled for four hours. 'Ali had lost his way in this monotonous stony desert. He denied it, but when his predictions did not materialize we found ourselves losing confidence in him. But the general direction, at least to the Wadi Hadhramaut, was obvious and once in the wadi we could easily reach Tarīm though it would be no short cut. Meanwhile the caravan was far away. Tarīm was the only possibility. After nearly six hours of forced marching the end of the jōl came in sight. As quickly as we could we hurried down a rocky cleft. The view of the town far below gave us new strength. Through the motionless heat and the dazzling fierceness of the light we approached the town that lay quivering at our feet. The first house we reached procured for us a saving bowl of cool water. The satisfaction of our thirst gave intense relish to our escape from the friendly jōl that had turned into a merciless enemy the moment our water supply ran out.

The town was without a sound. The hours of great heat had driven the townspeople to the shade and coolness of their houses. Straight through this dead Tarīm we walked to Sciyyid 'Umar Āl Kāf's new house. He was in the old one. Thither we went though it was the time of the midday rest. We were made welcome and given long, long drinks of cold water. What joy on earth could surpass this? Tea followed and then a fine meal. It was as men refreshed that we drove to Saiwūn in the afternoon. 'Ali, the guide, had the experience of his first drive in a motor car and paid for this glory by becoming shamefully sick.

In Saiwūn Sciyyid Abu Bakr's guest-house took us in its care, curing all fatigue. Next day Sālih arrived with the camels and we said good-bye to both guides and cameleers with the affection that one feels for men who have stood resolutely by their job and who have proved admirable companions in a country where men and water are equally scarce.

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THE second part of our plan of exploration was completed; the third part now presented itself. One can travel from the Wadi Hadhramaut to Arabia's southern coast by several routes. Eight years before we had travelled from Mukalla, the principal entrance-gate of the country, along the west side of the Kōr Seibān, its highest mountain, to the Wadi Du'an. We had then followed this wadi northward and reached the Hadhramaut proper just beyond Al Meshhed, that is, close to the junction of the Wadi 'Amd and the Wadi Hadhramaut. On the way back, failing to get through to Aden overland, we had followed an unusual route through the Wadi 'Amd, across the jōl of the Deiyyin beduin, through the Wadi al Hajar to the coast and finally along the ocean beach eastward to Mukalla. This time we had the choice between, on the one hand, the first motor-road of the Hadhramaut, built by Seiyid Abu Bakr Āl Kāf, beginning at Tarīm, crossing the territory of the rapacious Humūmi beduin and going straight to Ash Shilr the second largest port in the Hadhramaut and, on the other, the caravan road from Shibām through the Wadi Bin 'Ali. We decided upon this latter route that was unmapped and only partly described. Early explorers in the Hadhramaut, Hirsch¹ and the Bents² had, in 1893, each party working on its own, covered half of this route, that is, as far as the Wadi Huweira.

The search for trustworthy men with good camels would take several days. There were none in Saiwūn, but Seiyid Abu Bakr offered his valuable help and his secretary, Hasan Āl Sheiba, who was the excellent manager of the guest-house, at once sent out messengers. This search for camel-men gave me an opportunity to fulfil the half-promise to pay a second visit to Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh in Al Qatn and to 'Awadh bin Marta' in Henin for a last talk on Hadhrami problems.

¹ Leo Hirsch, *Reisen in Süd-Arabien, Mahra-land und Hadramut*. Leyden; E. J. Brill, 1897.

² Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Bent, *Southern Arabia*. London, 1900. "Smith, Elder & Co.

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Shibām in the morning sun shone in the glory of her proud Hadhrami beauty. In the palace we met for the first time the young Indian doctor who was occupying there a lonely outpost of Western medical science. He had complained to us of a great shortage of drugs so we left him all we could spare from our substantial medical stores. Over these days hung the melancholy sense of approaching farewell to a beautiful land and to a people with whom we had renewed contact and strengthened the bonds that united us.

At Henin with 'Awadh bin Marta' I found, as always, a warm welcome. It was not difficult to get conversation started with him. His busy brain was constantly working on many problems. Our talks moved round existing conditions in the Hadhramaut and the means of improving them. This man, who in Java had been one of the pioneers of the mechanical textile industry and who had seen there the blessing of the increased employment it brought, was trying to find here some means of providing work for the people, and especially for the younger people, the whole year round. He pointed out that this country had become accustomed to spending money that had been earned abroad. Hence Hadhrami children never had a chance to learn something useful. He took as an example some of the leading Seiyids. They had inherited their wealth from parents who had worked and earned money. The second generation passed their lives in spending it, though they generally spent it in a reasonable, wise and sometimes even noble, way. But they had kept their children around them and these youngsters had had only the narrow, restricted education that was available here, namely instruction in religion and the Arabic language. They had no opportunity to develop initiative or to accomplish something. They grew up as weaklings. How could that be changed?

It would not be easy. The existence of slavery was a hindrance but one that was disappearing. Slavery was bound to diminish under British rule and the British had stopped the import of slaves from overseas, from Africa. Work now done by slaves would one day be done by free men and the sons of the new Hadhramaut would set their hands to it. Then there was the question of agriculture, now the heavy toil of a socially-depressed class. It might expand so much that with the disappearance of slave-labour growing numbers of the now half-employed higher ranks of society would have to join in. Agriculture has a great future in the Hadhramaut if irrigation works are carried out and will create a need for able leaders. New species of crops could be introduced and more and

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better cattle raised. Life in the wadi could be made more attractive and entirely different from what it is now. Class distinctions and outworn conceptions of decorum would disappear. And these changes would come about easily for outside their homeland these people shun no kind of work but tackle it with great energy and vigour.

The leading classes would soon have to abandon their attitude of looking on and criticizing; they would have to join in the administration and raise within the country the money needed for it. England could not continue to pay their deficit indefinitely and would probably soon aim at restricting her intervention to scientific and technical assistance.

All this talk made us hungry so the customary Hadhrami dish of boiled rice reddened with a sauce and mingled with raisins and pieces of fat goat's-meat was produced. Then I took leave and drove to Al Qatn, to Sultan 'Ali bin Salāh, the man who had fallen into disgrace but who, in my opinion, by his knowledge and character surpassed his more fortunate colleagues in office.

'Awadh bin Marta' was the hard, self-made man who had risen from the ranks and had only now begun to think about the problems that lay beyond the assuring of purely personal prosperity. 'Ali bin Salāh was the aristocrat and thinker whose spirit had been nourished and whose mind moulded in the course of long periods of illness and in the study of Arabic classics. He had not succeeded in life and his lack of success seemed to have made him tolerant and wise. His country may still have need of him. Ingrams had had him removed from the trading capital of Shibām and sent to the garden-village of Al Qatn where he is a sultan in name only. Yet he spoke to us appreciatively of Ingrams' great diligence, his zeal for his work, his enthusiasm for the country and its people and his whole-hearted devotion to their interests. Not Ingrams but jealous, intriguing Hadhramis had been his opponents. Whatever had gone wrong and was still going wrong in the country was the fault of these men. 'Ali bin Salāh was content to wait. The time will perhaps come when he will be recalled from the quiet environment of his fine gardens and from the silence of his library. He is a man who listens well and reads well, who forms his own opinion on questions of world-policy and who approaches the ideas of other people with less Moslem prejudice and feeling of superiority than most members of the leading classes in the Hadhramaut.

Of course we also spoke of the wireless talks in Arabic that Berlin

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had then recently begun to broadcast. Everyone who lived within reach of a wireless set was full of these broadcasts. From what was told us we did not form a very high opinion of the knowledge and psychological insight of those who were responsible for the broadcasting. For instance, Berlin said that Philby had definitely returned to England and that it was now obvious that he was not a convinced Moslem but a political spy and that his last journey, extending to the Hadhramaut, had resulted in the British occupation and the appointment of Ingrams. In one of the following broadcasts a sharp attack was launched against conquering the Hadhramaut by brutal aerial bombardments. The material for this attack had been taken from articles of that same "spy," Philby, who had criticized mercilessly his country's policy in Southern Arabia.

In accordance with Hermann's request 'Ali bin Salāh had collected in paper-bags samples of all the specimens of wheat that were being cultivated in the Wadi Hadhramaut. On the bags he had written the names of the specimens, the time required for ripening and other details. He presented me with a tin of honey from his own fields as a souvenir of this second meeting which will stand out prominently in my recollections of the Hadhramaut. And so I said good-bye.

Back in Saiwūn the preparations for the trip to Mukalla were quickly completed. Frau von Wissmann would travel with the luggage by car under the protection of Hasan Āl Sheiba. She would go by way of Tarīm and the Āl Kāf motor-road to Ash Shihr. Thus we ourselves, travelling with the camels along the little-known Wadi Bin 'Ali route, could take a minimum of luggage. Our hope that we should be allowed to make this last journey through wadis and over jōls in company with our Aden escort did not materialize. Ingrams ruled that it was unnecessary to travel in his pacified country under military protection and therefore ordered our faithful companions to travel by lorry to Mukalla. It was a disappointment for us but we had to obey.

Hasan Āl Sheiba, after failing to come to an agreement with the Humūmi beduin, had succeeded in making a contract with some Ma'arra tribesmen to take us through the Wadi Bin 'Ali and the Wadi Huweira to Mukalla. On Wednesday evening, May 10th, they would load up our luggage and go ahead to Al 'Uqda at the entrance to the Wadi Bin 'Ali. We should follow by car.

After the fuss and hurry of packing we enjoyed an afternoon in the guest-house in the company of Seiyid Abu Bakr. His sons and some

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friends had arrived before him. There followed an animated exchange of views and arguments with some hot-blooded members of the party of progressive youth. On both sides the talk was straight and outspoken. We were able to reason with them frankly and, to all appearances, unsparingly, but in our hearts we sympathized with these young people who never had learned to set their hands to a job of work, who criticized spitefully and who now perceived with chagrin that the new régime had become established without their advice or co-operation being sought or given. They were in need of a shake-up so that they might see their own shortcomings and learn to respect the men who were actually doing the work. They had yet to realize that they had themselves given away their freedom when it had become quite clear that as a nation they were utterly incapable of making good use of it. Their attention had to be drawn to what the British were doing for them and they had to be made aware of the fact that in their particular case no other nation could be a better helper. There was no alternative left to them but to accept the disciplined tutorship of that nation whose administrators would teach the riotous Hadhramaut to behave as a coherent national community. Then, protected by England against the outside world, but free and independent within their own borders, they could confidently carve out for themselves a new future.

A young Hadhrami poet present had frequently sought our company. He was Sālih bin 'Ali Āl Hāmid al 'Alawī, a man who knew Java, Sumatra and Singapore and who offered us as a souvenir a tastefully-edited little book of poetry. His verses were in praise of the beauty of Java. At our request he gladly recited one of the poems in a deep, melodious voice. We could not help thinking of him as the poet of the Hadhramaut's resurrection ! He had a gift for verse but as yet lacked prophetic inspiration.

As a farewell we had a long and intimate talk with Seiyid Abu Bakr himself while squatting together on a carpet near the swimming-pool of his princely terrace. And thus we shall keep in our memory the grave Seiyid Abu Bakr to whom was given a task he never sought nor expected to receive, a task which in ever-growing measure brings him criticism and ingratitude but one for the execution of which posterity will do him great honour. A Seiyid of Abu Bakr Āl Kāf's standing raises the whole class of the Sāda. He is a living proof that not only at the dawn of their history in the Hadhramaut but even now there are, among these men who are the privileged of Allah, some who recognize their responsibilities towards their own people and who dutifully accept them. Seiyid Abu

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Bakr's example serves to remind every Seiyid who is content to enjoy an easy life that before all else *noblesse oblige*.

Towards sunset our car passed through the garden-gate and set off in the direction of the Sultan's palace. There we met Sultan Ja'far just setting out for a walk. We shook hands one after the other, Frau von Wissmann remaining until last in accordance with Arab practice. When she stretched out her hand he suddenly withdrew his. The time for the sunset prayer was near and we had forgotten that, by touching a woman, the Sultan would have sullied his ritually clean state, necessary for the performance of the *salât*. Islam has its own valuation of womankind.

Our last affectionate glance lingered over the high, white palace which reflected the golden glow of the setting sun then, turning to the streets where between the mud walls of the houses the dusk gathered and here and there a soft light glowed from an all-white mosque, we passed through the town-gate and for us the good days of Saiwūn were gone.

It was already dark in the palm-groves. The car sped on noiselessly over the thick carpet of fine dust, heaving and sinking softly like a ship at sea. We followed the track along which we had come on foot from Shibām. Some miles before that town the Wadi Bin 'Ali enters the Wadi Hadhramaut and there we turned southwards. The wide mouth of the wadi was well cultivated and only a driver who knew this country well could find his way along the twisting paths, through fields and date-groves, around hamlets and isolated houses. It was late and very dark when the car halted at the outer gate of Al 'Uqda, a small group of fine, tall houses where lived Sālim bin Ja'far, an old friend of mine, who had spent nearly the whole of his long life in Java and had succeeded in amassing a fortune there.

Only in the Hadhramaut one can do what we did now: wake up a family in the middle of the night, without a previous warning, and announce that you have come with a whole caravan to stay the night! We had not meant to be so late and did not realize what an unexpected burden we should be to our old friend. Eight years before, when we were also on our way back to the coast, our guide had pointed to the graceful, fretted outline of the grey and white roof terraces that rose above tall date-palms and told us how much the Dutch subject living there would appreciate a visit. So we had visited the hospitable Sālim bin Ja'far. And glad indeed he had been to see us until we told him that we had little time to spare and could not stay. It was difficult to get away and we only managed to do so

after giving a solemn promise to come back again. He scarcely believed us for Al 'Uqda is not a place within easy reach of Westerners. But we kept our promise and here we were knocking at his outer gate. Would he recognize us? We waited in suspense in front of the double doors, well barred at night-time, in the high mud-wall that protected the houses.

The servant who opened the gate knew us at once. The news was passed on to the lord of the house who came down to greet us accompanied by his sons and some friends. Yes, they all recognized us and we had no need to ask whether we were welcome: that was the most certain thing in the world. A good meal was ordered. It was long past any normal meal-time and we ventured a strong protest. We were simply silenced. Had we not yet learnt what Arab hospitality meant?

In the large majlis we sat down with our host and his house-friends. Sālim bin Ja'far spoke of our first visit and reminded me that eight years before he had requested me to induce the Netherlands Government to stop the sending of money to the Hadhramaut by Arabs in Java and thus put an end to the financing of wars. I well remembered his passionate discourse, the impressive complaint of a man surrounded by people involved in never-ending wars, a prisoner in his beautiful houses that he had continually to defend.

We talked about the much improved conditions and here, at least, we met a grateful Hadhrami. But now he was in trouble with regard to his houses in Surabaya the rents of which had diminished because of the world economic crisis. Sālim bin Ja'far fully appreciated the good opportunities our Government offered to Hadhramis and the privilege still granted to them of remitting to their own country the money they earn in Java.

One whole roof-terrace was put at our disposal as sleeping-quarters. On two sides waved the tops of high palm-trees. In the middle of the night we were awakened by the arrival of our caravan which unloaded in the courtyard.

Before sunrise the camel-men started preparing for the first day's trek. They were in a hurry to get away from the gardens and cultivated fields and to be back in the wilderness where their animals could have free grazing. We were soon ready to follow the caravan but here dear old Sālim intervened. He himself brought a kettle with boiling, sweetened ginger-coffee. A servant followed with two hot rounds of bread for each one of us. And this was our real farewell to the Wadi Hadhramaut. The last hospitality given to us there came from a non-Seiyid. Sālim bin Ja'far had toiled for

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many years to earn the money with which he had built his graceful and at the same time castle-like houses of Al 'Uqda. He had now painted them white with blue borders and window-frames. The tall date-palms of his fertile garden assured the fresh, green background that made Al 'Uqda a thing of beauty. The houses were full of women and children, the latter of mixed Java-Arab blood.' The young children who are sent here from Java for their education bring with them a steady flow of Malay language and influence. Java is pressing her stamp of kindness and her gentle ways deeper and deeper into the stern face of this part of Arabia. We left amidst the gay crowd of friends and neighbours who are always to be found in the shadow of Sālim bin Ja'far's famous hospitality. The happy existence of this beautiful hamlet of Al 'Uqda is only possible because of that close link between Java and this country.

Al 'Uqda made a good beginning to the third and last part of our journey in Southern Arabia. Full of happy recollections of all our friendships both old and new we now turned our backs upon the famous wadi where the Sciyids reign with money sent from abroad and where on the latest page of Hadhrami history England had written the wonderful word of promise: "Peace".

Our beduin preferred the wilderness and we followed them at a good pace. The wadi became poorer in date groves the more we penetrated into it. The path was wide and there was much traffic. Irrigation channels with strong dykes flanking them showed that every effort was made to conserve as much seil-water as possible for the gardens and fields. On our path we met the prosperous inhabitants bound for the market of Shibām or for their villages and gardens. In some places groups of men were busy ploughing or dragging soil to the irrigation dykes with the help of boards placed on edge and used as a harrow. Farther on all cultivation ceased. At the last village, which stood on an empty terrace of loess, we asked for a drink at the well and filled our water-bags. Then we returned to the wadi-bed where our caravan had trekked on alone.

Noon was approaching and it was getting very hot. When we asked our people where the place was for the midday rest we learnt to our great consternation that we were travelling with a caravan in which nobody knew the road. They had been convinced that we should travel along a well-trodden caravan road and would always be able to get information from passers-by. Seeing how deserted our path was the Ma'arra beduin were not at ease. Half-way to the coast we should hit on the caravan

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route that comes from the northern end of the thickly populated and very fertile Wadi Du'an and follows the Wadi al Aisar until, at the 'Aqaba Huweira, that and our present path met. We might possibly travel without seeing a soul for the next few days. So when at last we saw a shepherd in a distance we questioned him about the places where we might find water and about the road. We soon perceived that it entailed considerable risk to go on without a guide. The shepherd seemed to be the last representative of the inhabited part of the wadi and he could not leave his goats.

We went on trusting to our lucky stars. Wherever banks of loess appeared along the seil-bed there was vegetation. In the shade of one dwarf tree we discovered an old shepherd asleep beside his wife who was keeping watch. He directed us to an overhanging rock where we should find shade for the midday halt. There Wasi gave us his first demonstration in cookery for we had lost our cook with our Aden escort. Cooking a meal attracts people in the desert as carrion draws birds of prey out of an empty sky. The spell did not fail for soon the shepherd appeared accompanied by a young fellow, a candidate for employment as guide. We at once commenced bargaining and with an advance of four Maria Theresa dollars he trotted off to his house undertaking to be back again before we broke up. Thus an omission that might have involved us in grave difficulties was repaired in an unexpectedly fortunate way.

As we trekked on we attempted to establish good relations with our new camel-men and with their animals. At the start the beduin always tries to take the reins. That is quite natural because he is the lord of the jöl and the empty wadi and normally only he commands the caravan. With us, however, he would have to obey people who had no understanding whatsoever but who had money. Thus the beduin would try to obey as little as he could without risking loss of the money. The first days of a caravan trip are usually days of silent battle, each testing the strength of the other party. Hence I was not surprised when our caravan leader came up to me and said that he wanted to send back two out of nine camels, together with a little boy, to the tribe's camping-ground. We replied that we had contracted for eight camels but that if seven were sufficient we had no objection except that we should only pay for seven. Did we have no compassion for the little boy or for his mother who was waiting for him? No, we were entirely without such sentiments. So the nine camels stayed with us and the little fellow became our friend, but only after many biscuits.

The caravan plodded on through the narrowing wadi which now had

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thick layers of loess along its walls. In the afternoon we spotted a solitary mud-walled husn built on top of a high bank of loess near the side of the wadi. It was the Husn al Ghanam, the dwelling place of Sālim bin 'Umar Āl Hāmid. Down in the seil-bed of the wadi was a well, thirty-six qāmas deep, with a mouth that had been built up with masonry as protection against the suyūl. As we approached an Arab descended from the motionless silence of the castle. The camel-men whispered: "That is the Seiyid". They went forward to meet him and kissed his hand respectfully. Our bearing was less humble but the Seiyid was very kind and invited us to stay the night with him. We had it in mind to trek on for at least another hour and a half and so politely declined the kind invitation.

We camped on top of the loess wall on the right bank of the wadi. Not far off a beduin family with a herd of goats were living in a grotto and there we could buy some milk.

Next morning we hit upon the 'Aqaba Husn al Qā. Not far behind it came the real climb, the 'Aqabat as Suwe-ghira. This 'aqaba was better laid than any we had previously seen. It followed the wall of an adjacent wadi and mounted gradually. The path was wide and much worn and here and there were remnants of pavement. The night before three caravans with merchandise from Ash Shihr had passed us on their way to Shibām. The cobbles of the pavement of the 'aqaba had been polished by the rubbing of the soles of innumerable camels. Elsewhere camel-droppings made an elastic carpet in which numbers of ticks and bugs were waiting for new masters. Everything pointed to our treading here on an ancient and much-frequented 'aqaba. Freya Stark may be right in supposing that this is part of the ancient incense-road. No rock carvings or inscriptions in the Himyaritic character were to be seen. The limestone of the walls was too soft to preserve messages cut into it.

'Aqabat as Suwe-ghira, which means "the very small 'aqaba", led on to a typical Hadhrani jōl with its dry breeze, long views and promise of cool nights without mosquitos. At about ten o'clock we heard the sound of a distant motor and soon we spotted two aeroplanes like small, black dots in the now colourless sky. That must be Ingrams who, with his staff, was travelling through the high, cool ether on his way to Saiwūn where he was then expected. In a few hours he could cover a distance over which we should toil many days. We saw him but he could not see us; he thought that he would meet us in Saiwūn.

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We took our midday rest at Al 'Aqubiya in the scanty shade of some small trees.

In the afternoon the caravan-path led through a fine, green wadi past several herds of well-fed cattle. When the evening fell we were again travelling over a barren jöl. The camel-men asked permission to go on until they could reach a place where the camels could feed. In a short time they were far ahead of us because Hermann had often to stop and take his bearings and the country was without conspicuous landmarks. It became dark. Had the guide not stayed with us we should have had to stop. Even now it was difficult to grope our way over the uneven rocks. At last, sore of feet and stumbling with fatigue, we arrived in the camp that had been pitched two hours later than we ourselves had intended but when the well-being of his camels was at stake Salimün stuck at nothing.

In the afternoon of the next day Kōr Seibān, the Hadhramaut's highest mountain, appeared in the far distance as a perpendicular, hazy, blue rock-face. Eight years before we had passed this peak on the western side when going to the Hadhramaut through the Wadi Himen; now we should see it from the east. We camped for the night on the Jöl ad-Dhurāfa at about 3,900 feet above sea level. The breeze was strong and the mosquitos had little chance although even at that height they were present. In the afternoon the weather had been oppressive with a menacing thunderstorm in the distance. For a moment some rain fell but then the breeze got the upper hand and blew the clouds away. We supposed that this was the start of the monsoon that had penetrated inland. The distance to the ocean as the crow flies was no longer great and we were close to the watershed between the Wadi Hadhramaut and the sea. Far to the south we could see the last mountain ranges that barred the high, interior plateaux of Arabia from the sea. White packs of clouds with tattered fringes were pressing through the large gaps between the flat-topped mountains. Before we reached our camp for the night our water-skins were filled from a rocky hole in a small wadi-bed. The place was shewn to us by a young shepherdess who was on her way to visit a girl friend and who, at a safe distance from the caravan, kept up with us skipping lightly over the rocks. The beduin women here had given up their privilege of the uncovered face. The influence of Islam must have accomplished this, thanks to the activity of the Sāda who are rigorous in enforcing orthodox forms of behaviour on the people. The women here went completely veiled with only a slit in front for the eyes. Gown and veil were dark-blue, nearly black.

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In Shibām and Saiwūn a very wide sky-blue gown was worn while in Tarīm gowns of brown and red prevailed. Under these mantle-like garments women and girls wore dresses of blue and sometimes of deep-red, profusely adorned with many-coloured embroidery and shining little spangles. Intricate patterns in red, green and yellow were applied to gowns that hung loosely round the body and were held in the middle by a girdle of braided silver-wire. We never could admire them closely or for long. That would have been ill-mannered and the women would have become very alarmed if we strangers had showed special interest in them. Some of the shepherdesses of this region wore large straw hats similar to those of the women in the Wadi Hadhramaut but with a less pointed crown. To buy such a hat proved to be quite impossible. Every woman wove one for herself and it was scandalous to sell a part of one's clothing.

Often we saw breastworks of piled stones in places where the road led through mountain-passes. These were posts for defence or for surprise attacks in the days of war now recently come to an end. The notched outlines on the edges of flat-topped mountains and the small, stone piles on the highest points of rocky spurs that we saw on jōls elsewhere, were distinguishable here also as they stood out in silhouette against the sky.

Where many caravans pass it is logical to find graves. Some were big and had the round shape of those in the coastal regions of East Africa. These probably belonged to slaves who until quite recently were imported from those countries.

The path was now wide and easy. Four caravans, each twenty to thirty camels strong, passed before we had set up our bivouac for the night. It was clear that we were approaching the busy part of a great trade route of the Hadhramaut.

On Sunday, May 14th, we had our noon rest under a little tree near the head of the 'Aqabat Huweira, close to the junction of our road with that from the Wadi Du'an. Caravans going inland passed with bags of merchandise and the famous dried fish. The coastward bound *qatārs* (big trade-caravans: also used for railway trains) were now generally transporting large bunches of dhura-stalks destined as fodder for the great numbers of camels that were waiting at the ports. Near the cross-roads large flocks of sheep and goats were also passing, covering the landscape like a big wave spreading over it.

The sky became overcast while we were resting and we set out in a gentle rain for the head of the 'aqaba which began by descending a narrow

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wadi whose slopes and bed were covered with a rich vegetation. A thorny type of tree, probably the Abyssinian mountain acacia, grew here in profusion as on the Talh pass. Thanks to the recent rains bushes and plants were covered with fresh, green leaves and some even decked with flowers. We felt as if we were entering a different world. On the path, which wound among trees and bushes, was much traffic. In some places there were two paths, one on each side of the wadi. Occasionally spaces had been cleared for caravans to pass each other. Caravan after caravan passed by. Shepherds and cameleers cheerfully called out to their animals and the narrow wadi resounded with the noise of man and beast.

The rain through which we walked was a mere drizzle but it must have been raining much harder on the high mountains around us. We could see through our binoculars long, thin waterfalls tumbling down the steep sides of the flat-topped Kōr Seibān. Now and then there was a clash in the traffic and quarrels with much abusive language broke out between the caravan-leaders, each of whom refused to give way to the other. Here there were very many plants to be collected for we were not in such a hurry as the quarrelling men whose daily bread depended on the speed of their caravans.

Suddenly the wadi took an unexpected turn to the left and we looked down into a wilder, deeper cleft that presented a distant view to the steep and much eroded slopes of the Jebel Battih and the Kōr Seibān. Here the path was cut out of the right rock-face while to the left, far below us, huge boulders littered the soil-bed. Again the path turned sharply and then we stopped to drink in the beauty of the scene. The setting sun covered the tops and the perpendicular flanks of the Hadhramaut's highest mountains with golden colours, sharply cut by dark shadows. Far below, in front of us, the path wound in zigzags or passed between pieces of rock that had crashed down from the towering walls. At the bottom of the cleft pools of green-blue water were visible, from which a thin ribbon spun down to some dark-green fields. A large caravanserai had been built in the most obvious spot at the foot of the 'aqaba as all the caravans coming down had to rest there and those going upwards prepared their animals for the climb with extra rest and food. The high, towering walls of the wadi were draped with a shimmer of fresh green and near the bottom, where the steep slopes flattened out, bushes and small trees were growing. Along the path were many flowers including a number of *aloe vera* with bright red racemes. We saw also the white blossoming aloe together with many bushes unknown

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to us but whose heavily-scented, yellow flowers were a great attraction to butterflies and bees. The Hadhramis are famous bee-keepers and they had not missed this chance but had suspended woven baskets in the trees along the road for use as beehives. Springtime sounds and smells and colours in a tiny strip of the Hadhramaut framed by the wild grandeur of the dark rock bastions and the boulder-strewn torrent-bed!

Together with fifty camels from northern parts of the Wadi Du'an, half hidden under their huge loads of qasab, we began the descent where the path was laid out in endless zigzags. The camels were led down in the traditional way: the caravan was split up into small groups of three or four animals and each group preceded by its leader. Cameleers talk and sing to their camels in a loud voice; praising, encouraging, warning, they sing in high falsetto tones which bear a resemblance to yodeling. The deeper we descended between the high, rocky walls the more the echoes resounded. This stimulated the singers to efforts of sustained jubilation. In the gathering dusk of this immense rock-cathedral the sounds melted into a desert chorale the primitive beauty of which we began to understand. The 'aqaba descents along the rocky walls must have been the places where the rough beduin songs were born. In camp at night on the jōls the singing of the beduin had often made us furious. From now on we began to listen attentively to their songs, to hear in them echoes of painful and dangerous climbs on the 'aqabas and to recognize there the mysterious urge in mankind to sing a soothing lullaby of his toils and sorrows and a song of victory over his difficulties. We found in them beduin art.

The rocks here were limestone of a coarse, easily-eroding kind. They were covered with a dark, tough crust. In many places the chalk under the crust had been worn away by the eternal winds and washed out by rainstorms when their fury beat on the rock-face. Thus were carved out many hollows with snow-white, shell-shaped walls whose upper side was covered by the overhanging brown-black crust of a baldaquin formation. For long stretches the wadi-walls were adorned with these canopied hollows into which light and shadow brought depth and colour. The fragments of rock that had tumbled down, some as large as houses, had acquired fantastic shapes through erosion, some becoming giant roadstools, some huge shells and some simply hollowed-out blocks.

The caravans had reached the bottom of the valley and we hurried after them to prevent our people, driven by companionable instincts, from couching their camels near one of the big caravanserais. We shunned

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those places because of the smells and the noise and out of a holy fear of the hosts of camel parasites that live long hidden under stones and in the sand ready to attack fresh animals and human beings and to feast on their blood. The poor village of Batīh partly drew its living from resting caravans. After a friendly talk with the people who invited us to accept the hospitality of their village we asked to be excused. We settled down for the night about half a mile from Batīh on a rocky plateau above the wadi-bed. Salimīn, the caravan leader, soon left with some money to buy qasab for the camels as he could not let the camels stray to find their own food in this inhabited place with its cultivated fields. Salimīn was full of gratitude because of this impending treat for his camels. He took care of his animals very seriously as beduin usually do. We tried to profit by his happy mood by telling him that the next day we were not going on at once but in the afternoon. Vociferous opposition! He did not want to lose time in arriving at Mukalla and finding new loads, he wanted to be away from this place which was expensive and unsuited to his camels. This quiet Salimīn went mad when the well-being of his camels was at stake. His solicitude for his *nāqa* (milk-giving she-camel) was touching. Every edible thing his eye lighted on during the march was gathered and twisted into a good bite for a camel, then he would run up to her, force open her mouth, push the green morsel into it and then, much satisfied, Salimīn would walk on. This pleasing quality of his was the cause of many conflicts with us. True, the camels were hired to serve us, but Salimīn often thought in reverse order.

Next morning some extra money went to Salimīn to buy food for his animals. To restore friendship completely we permitted the men to slaughter the goat we had bought for them and to prepare an exceptionally good meal before the march was continued. That would keep them busy the whole morning and after having stuffed themselves to capacity they would want to sleep and would insist no more on our leaving early.

Of course Hermann and Wasi could not pass the Kōr Seibān without climbing it and the lower promontory as well. Some lads from the mountain would act as guides and instrument carriers. With our binoculars we had been able to see that high up the mountain slope was a hamlet set among fields and even date-palms. The slope in front of us seemed steep and difficult to climb. I went back to the 'Aqaba Huweira to take photographs. The caravans that had camped the night at Batīh had left early. The last, singing cries of the caravans were resounding

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between the rocky walls when I reached the zigzag path. Then complete silence reigned. It was pleasure to climb along the wall in search of places from which one could get the best views of this small corner of the Hadhramaut, where the rocky boulders had crashed down from the crumbling walls and where the seils, with thundering might, broke their way through a cleft filled with eroded scree.

Three very satisfied people came back to camp at noon. To the satisfaction of completing useful scientific work was added the joy of undisturbed contact with extraordinary scenery. The lime and sandstone strata lay bare before our eyes where the wadis had deeply furrowed them and where the seils were gnawing at the crumbling walls. The 'Aqaba Huweira gave us a glimpse into the unending work of the powers of nature among these gaunt rocks where the eroding effect of water, wind, heat and cold was most clearly apparent.

Our beduin had kept their thoughts to preparing the banquet of the slaughtered goat. Although we did not think the result of their labours very tasty we enjoyed watching the scene of deep satisfaction with the goodness of life that these people showed as they devoted all their attention and an intense activity of their jaws to the process of mastication. Harmony and mutual goodwill, indispensable to any caravan, were clearly being restored. After the meal we travelled in a happy mood along the quickly descending wadi-bed. Wherever it was steep or where a fall of rock blocked the passage, the path became a real miniature 'aqaba, winding up hills of scree and zigzagging down again.

At the end of this difficult piece of road lay the village of Al Gheil (the spring). A long, narrow strip of date groves and irrigated dhura and museibeli fields took up every square foot of ground that could be used for agriculture in the high-walled, narrow wadi. The houses were pressed against the foot of the rock and were square, windowless structures of loosely-piled stones with a veranda of palm-stems in front of them. Al Gheil had an aspect of poverty. Here, as in Battih, the inhabitants were so-called *masākin*, a word meaning "poor people", that is farmers or any hard-working people not belonging to a beduin tribe. We talked with some of them and with the leaders of passing caravans. These conversations were bound by traditional rules. They always began with a series of questions and answers, very short and produced in a loud staccato manner. Only after the performance of that stereotyped and probably very ancient ceremonial challenge and response could the real talk begin. "Why do

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you walk through this wadi and not travel by car along the Āl Kāf road as the others of your kind all do?" Or, "Why don't you travel through the air as the British do? How did you find the Hadhramaut? Can the water supply be increased?" and so on. We always answered that the Hadhramaut was making headway thanks to peace and security. They agreed with that. Did we think that the peace would last even after the agreed time of three years? "Yes, certainly." Then we asked whether the traffic on the caravan-road had increased. "Very much so. Nobody carries a rifle any more; they are very cheap now."

We had entered the region where malaria is endemic and the greater part of our quinine had been distributed in Battih. People in Al Gheil said that they had many mosquitos but no fevers. The medicines most in demand there were purgatives.

We passed the night on a sandstone ledge in the bed of the wadi. The air was damp and hot (we had descended to 1,700 feet above sea level) and there were many mosquitos. Next morning we were stirring very early. The camel-men who did not know this route but could smell and feel the proximity of the sea imagined that we could reach the coast before nightfall if we marched quickly. The thought spurred us to our best efforts. The wear and tear of our shoes had been much worse than we had anticipated. Repairs effected with sticking-plaster from the medicine chest gave only temporary relief and walking had become painful. The whole of that day we marched through a wadi-bed with long stretches of soft sand which the camels found easier going than we did. It was a day of beautiful scenery and much geological interest as many deviations were visible in the disposition of the strata which elsewhere in the country was unvaried. The limestone layer here reappeared with the attractive baldaquin formation of a tough, dark-coloured crust overhanging shiny, white, wind-swept hollows. One such hollow, as large as a grotto, offered good shelter for the midday halt. A hole in the side wall of the hollow permitted the entry of an agreeable current of air.

During the morning we passed a small date-plantation, Fuhaiya, which was watered from a spring in the wadi-wall. A conduit of masonry, plastered with lime, carried the water to two reservoirs at the foot of the slope. The people of Fuhaiya told us that this fine construction was a waqf, the pious foundation of a sciyid whose graceful white tomb we had passed a short while before.

In the afternoon we trekked on through the wadi. It was hot and the

going was very heavy. A small seil had flowed five days before, following some rain. The seil rebounding from the rocky wadi-side had scoured out a deep hole in the wadi-bed with its swirling water. This hole we found still full of water of a deep-brown colour because of the loam that was mixed with it. When we remarked: "This water is too dirty to be put in our water-bags," our beduin answered indignantly: "It is sweet and very good; it is a direct gift from heaven". Water has to be appraised and valued in a way different from that we learned at home. One has to know that rain and its resulting seil are direct, heavenly gifts and that their water must therefore be extra good if it is still fresh. Water is distinguished here by various terms and when speaking of a town or village the first question asked is always: how is its water? is it sweet, brackish or bitter? is it laxative or constipating? The muddy, brown seil-water must be good and so our people drank it in grateful draughts.

We halted for the night at Ar Rūba on a wide, sandy plain with an unhindered view to the south where we knew the sea must be. To the right lay the high ridge that separated us from the Wadi Himem. The night was cool for this low altitude and we were free from mosquitos. The dampness of the atmosphere was so great that, in the morning, not only were the blankets and the clothes we had put beside our mattresses wet through, but a dense fog enveloped us and for a long while made it impossible to round up the camels. The camel-men now tried hard to serve us well and in a naive way they asked repeatedly whether we were not satisfied with them. The end of the trip was coming within sight and with it the expectation of a handsome present! We were fortunate in having diligent people but obeying, when things went contrary to their wishes, was hard for them. Then the unruly beduin nature got the upper hand and the man who was used to living alone or in a small and loosely-organized group and who had never learnt to conform to the wishes of others showed himself. These men too showed a fanatical care for their camels, particularly if they could practise it at our expense. Just as Salimīn toiled for the well-being of his nāqa, so 'Abbūd was full of devotion for his tall, ugly, black camel that suffered from skin disease and had a festering tumour on the breast as big as two fists put together. Between them there were continual contentions in the interests of their respective camels. These animals represented for them their daily bread and the greater part of their lives was passed in trekking up and down between the interior and the coast. Before the Pax Britannica they could only work in their

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tribal regions or under the protection of paid *siyāras*. Now the whole land lay open to them and they could go wherever they liked, even into territory that was unknown to them. That was also the case with our Ma'arra people. Sālih, the guide, knew the road and the watering-places although he was a Kathīri and we were trekking here through Seibāni country. Thanks to the Western peace the world had become wider to these Eastern peoples.

But with this advantage a grave danger entered the country. Roads were being built over which, before long, motor lorries would roll. The beduin had been explicitly promised that those competitors would only be allowed to carry perishable goods and passengers with their personal belongings. The transport of all other merchandise would continue to be done by the camels of the beduin.

Much was changing. It was of great importance that prosperity should increase even if only a little, so that life could draw away from the verge of want and that, in future, there might be room for something higher than a bare struggle for existence. Salimīn knew already what his religion meant, at least he regularly and devoutly performed the *salāt*. But on top of the half-grasped, outward form, understanding of the spiritual content of Islam had still to come and then the beduin would be lifted to a higher level of humanity. Young Tarīm had inscribed the Islamization of the beduin on its standard and had built small schools and mosques in distant beduin centres. The arrival of the British, who they feared might try to spread their own religion, had given new impetus to proselytism of the Faith of the Prophet among the beduin.

The wadi gradually widened as we drew nearer to the coast. Finally it merged into hilly country. The road climbed over several small passes, on the top of which we could catch a breeze from the sea that was cooling in the damp heat of the day. At the top of one high pass we stopped in surprise: behind low hills we could distinguish the hazy blue of the sea. It was the Indian Ocean upon which we turned our backs two months previously when we had marched inland from the beach of the Shuqra Sultanate. Now, also, to the west was visible the long stretching range of mountains, reaching 1,800 feet in the highest places, that follows the coast closely and at the southern foot of which Mukalla nestles.

We took a short, midday rest in the shade of some trees and then we went on, marching at a quick pace through hot and barren limestone hills, in the direction of Al Harshiyāt, the big village where we should strike

our first route into the Hadhramaut and where Hermann, with a cry of jubilation, would declare his mapping work completed. At the approach to the village we passed some fresh, green fields. Here we saw our first coconut-palms which, being close to the sea, produce a normal quantity of fruit.

The sun was setting as we reached Al Harshiyāt. This was formerly one of the strongly fortified advance-posts of the Qa'iti régime. The towers built on the surrounding hill-tops had been abandoned. The village itself now seemed more prosperous and better cared for than when we first saw it. Some large, new houses had been built and the date groves and fields seemed to have been extended. The great number of siqāyas that dotted the countryside showed that many paths met here.

According to the information given us it would be possible to reach Mukalla in three hours and we were free to march after dark now as Hermann's route-mapping had ceased. Further, this was a malarial region and we were travelling without mosquito-nets having included them in the luggage sent on ahead. We therefore decided to push on much to the dismay of the caravan. Now that for once we wanted to go on in the dark it did not suit them. They pretended that the camels were too tired and hungry, and above all that we could not violate the traditional practice of wayfarers and approach an inhabited place when it was dark. That last argument was a most weighty one. We wanted to violate a sacred beduin custom and that caused superstitious apprehension. Only robbers come near a camp, town or village, at night-time. The gate of Mukalla was closed after sunset and we should have to pass the night on the town refuse-heap: so Salimīn worded his prediction. We said that the new day that had dawned for the Hadhramaut had swept away old laws and that they, our cameleers, were approaching Mukalla, the residence of the Hukūma, under our protection and would enter it with us even in the darkness of the night. The inflexibility of our decision had to be made quite clear to the men before they obeyed, unwillingly. They repeatedly produced arguments for halting. We had already been on the march for more than ten hours, the road seemed never-ending and the night was dark and without a moon. With aching feet in utterly worn-out shoes we trudged monotonously on. Our will impelled us. The longing for rest, for a bath and clean surroundings gave the energy to keep the whole sulking, unwilling caravan in motion.

Hermann and I recognized several points of the road but there were

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more that seemed strange and confusing. Near Mukalla the road mounted a high bank beside a wide strip of water. That had not existed eight years before. We were informed later that a huge seil, together with a storm on the coast, had deepened the old wadi-bed so much that since then a long arm of the sea had penetrated into the land. This had obliterated a large section of the camping-place that used to stretch to the very gate of Mukalla. There the numerous camels were crouching close together. The gate of the town was only half-closed and we managed to pass through without attracting the attention of the sleeping guard. From the darkness of the desert we suddenly stepped into the unreal, ultra-modern, blue neon-light of the principal street that went from one end of the long, narrow town to the other. Our beduin stood stock still. All their pride and self-reliance vanished. The glare and noise of the still-wakeful town made them unhappy and afraid. With some difficulty we found the building where Western visitors usually lodge. It proved still more difficult to unearth the man who had the keys to its secure padlocks. But at long last we were able to enter the rooms that had been put in readiness for us, and the caravan was allowed to camp for the rest of the night in the yard in front of the building where food was provided in plenty for the tired animals. Salimin, 'Abbūd and the others forgave us for pushing on the moment they had mastered their fear of the devilish, blue light and had seen that there was a quiet camping-place and food for the animals. It was their last bivouac with the three foreigners and the end of our desert trip.

Frau von Wissmann was asleep when the guest-house was opened. Our arrival was a pleasant surprise to her for she had not expected us so soon. Her trip by car on the Āl Kāf motor-road under protection of Hasan Āl Sheiba had been, she said, great fun.

We were thus all united again but not for long. My German friends were to return to their sombre country where tension was increasing and the menace of approaching war gathered in strength. In the dark days to come the freedom we had so deeply enjoyed during our two months' trek over jōls and through wadis would be to them a comforting recollection. I was to go straight back to Java, the emigration goal No. 1 of the Hadhramis.

Builders of a New Hadhramaut

MUKALLA had kept unharmed and undefiled the ageing beauty of a pure Arab town. The view from the roof of the guest-house did not, however, satisfy us, although when the first rays of the sun woke us there from a night's sleep or when we went up to catch the cool evening breeze a wide expanse of the beach and the rollers of the Indian Ocean were spread before us. But only part of the town itself was visible. To the left we could see the old trading-quarter with its tightly-packed merchants' houses and tall, Government buildings standing on a rocky headland that jutted into the sea. To survey Mukalla well we had to stand on the roof of one of those houses. Then, with our backs to the sea, we faced the dark wall of the coastal mountain-range with white towers of defence built on its crest sharply standing out against the sky high above the town. Pressed between the deep-blue sea and the dark rock-wall behind lay the small, white town with its high houses heaped against each other. One of the mosques reflected its fine, Hadhrami minaret in the water. On the light swell of the ocean small fishermen's canoes and graceful two-masted dhows were rolling lazily in front of the town. These excellent, sea-going ships ply between Zanzibar, Southern Arabia, Bombay and the Persian Gulf and have the typical lines of the old Dutch East Indiamen which centuries ago were seen in these seas. The present-day low stem and the high poop and stern adorned with wood-carvings must have been borrowed from our seafaring forefathers. For us their memory is preserved only in old paintings but here they exist in reality making the sea-approach to Mukalla harmonize with the ancient beauty of the town.

We hoped to achieve three objects before leaving Mukalla. First, to visit again the fertile oasis of Gheil Bā Wazīr, next, to see part of our former route to the Wadi Du'an which could now be done by motor car, and last, but not least, to meet Ingrams and his collaborators.

Gheil Bā Wazīr, the centre of cultivation of the famous Humūmi tobacco, has already been described in *Hadhramaut, Some of Its Mysteries Unveiled*. Our present intention was to perform a ziyāra. The pleasant,

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little town owes its existence to a gheil. It lies half-way between Mukalla and Ash Shihr but some miles inland and is accessible by motor car. A former Sultan of Mukalla had built there a summer residence with a delightful bathing-pool and big gardens of fruit-trees. We found it all unchanged and very well-kept. The gardens had been extended and now made an oasis that could vie in charm and fertility with the best parts of the Wadī Hadhramaut. One small change was apparent. The large building for the harīm now served a new purpose. The women had disappeared after the death of the Sultan and his successor did not believe in the maintenance of a multitudinous royal harīm, an idea that had been imported from India and was loathed by the Hadhramis as a shame on Islam. He put the women's quarters at the disposal of an Indian specialist in agriculture who now lived and worked there and used the gardens for his experiments. Outwardly there was little difference to be seen but the whole country knew of and appreciated the change that had been brought about by the lord of the Qa'eiti part of the Hadhramaut.

Before arriving at Al Gheil the driver of our taxi asked if he might make a detour in order to show us the garden made by him in this hilly country with its thick layer of limestone. Naturally we were eager to see it. 'Ubeid bin Sunkar had chosen for the great experiment of his life a wide depression between the hills where water gathered after rains and deposited layers of mud. The chief problem had been to ensure a permanent water-supply for this accumulation of silt. With money he had earned abroad 'Ubeid hired labourers to cut a tunnel that for the most part ran deep under ground through the layer of limestone in a straight line to the gheil. Four, and sometimes five, yards deep his conduit had had to be tunnelled through the limestone rock. At regular distances man-holes connected with the surface and through these we could appreciate the amount of hard work that was hidden out of sight. The conduit, which was more than a mile long, was well finished-off and its water flowed underground, protected against evaporation. Our car stopped near some mud houses and coolies' huts. From there we followed 'Ubeid on foot to his first big garden. Long walls of heaped stones fixed its future dimensions but of the space inside only a part was as yet under cultivation. The conduit filled two large, masonry basins from which the water flowed through a system of smaller conduits to the various plots. We admired the young coconut-trees, some with yellowish-brown and some with shining-green nuts, papaws heavily laden with fruit, guavas, pomegranates and some fine

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date-palms. In the shade of the fruit-trees were several kinds of vegetables for the table and lucerne for camel fodder. 'Ubeid himself climbed a coconut tree and threw down some nuts for us to enjoy later in the day, in the Sultan's garden. 'Ubeid told us that his father had left him nothing. Everything we now admired he himself had gradually built with the money earned by his own unrelenting toil. Here in his home country he had had his chance when peace and justice came to reign. 'Ubeid was one of those who had seized their chance, who believed in a new future for his country and who, while working for their own profit, would bring prosperity to others. Among the limestone rocks he created "living" land: he was one of the builders of the new Hadhramaut.

As only a few days remained before our departure from Mukalla we found it impossible to hire a car and drive out on the new motor road to the Wadi Du'an. The old camel-track was known to us and the descent from the jöl along the perpendicular wall of rock to the Wadi Du'an still stood out sharply in our memory. Who could have traced a motor road down that forbidding wall? Ingrams told us. The first motor road of the country was built by Hadhramis: it ran from Ash Shihr to Tarim.

The second road, from Mukalla to the Wadi Du'an, was again built by Hadhramis. Ingrams had asked British engineers to come and check the plans; they found them acceptable, even to the alignment of the 'aqaba, so Ingrams decided to entrust the actual building to Hadhrami road-engineers. Seiyid Abu Bakr Āl Kāf had completed the first motor road without foreign help. The second one, crossing even more difficult country, would again be pure Hadhrami work. I still could scarcely believe it but, on reflection, decided that these first Hadhrami motor roads would probably be well suited to Hadhrami drivers who were recruited from men accustomed to taking their camels over frightful 'aqabas, and who were doubtless convinced that with a motor car they could do very much the same as with their former means of transport. They, then, must build their own roads for their own new Hadhramaut. The Pax Britannica had made roads possible and the Hadhramis now thought they could not do without them.

Finally we had the privilege of meeting in Mukalla, surrounded by his collaborators, the man who had been chosen to guide the Hadhramaut to the dawn of a new day. His name will live in the history of the country because of the peace that he brought at the order and by the power of Great

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Britain. The "Sulh Ingrams" will continue to bear his name if it proves to have vitality.

Ingrams is a man of peace and the Hadhramaut longed for peace. But not all of it: there were exceptions. Some tribes delighted in marauding; others wanted first to settle blood-feuds and would not acknowledge that spilt blood always cries for revenge, for more killing. These were the people who had to be brought to a definite halt, and Ingrams soon found that to his word the compelling power of England and even punishment had occasionally to be added. His methods have met with sharp criticism. Not from the Hadhramis themselves but from critics in other countries and from one Englishman whose word, when he speaks for Arabia and the Arabs, reaches far. We had in our travels crossed many Arab lands for which Great Britain bears the responsibility. We had travelled in the Hadhramaut before Ingrams came and when the protection of Great Britain did not go beyond keeping away foreign penetration. As we now had seen the Hadhramaut some years after Ingrams' attempt to bring peace to the country we consider it our duty to give our opinion on the punitive expeditions from the air. H. St. J. B. Philby, the greatest Arabian explorer of our time, has bitterly criticized the methods used for the pacification of the Hadhramaut. He not only used for this purpose the introduction to the book in which he put on record the journey on which he himself entered the Hadhramaut (*Sheba's Daughters*), but his severe condemnation of the aerial bombardment of primitive tribes has been flung in the face of Britain's leaders in the daily press at home and abroad.

As soon as we met Ingrams we asked him to give an explanation of his methods of pacification. He gladly entered upon this subject and spoke of the repugnance he himself felt against aerial bombardments when, notwithstanding all the warnings that had been given and the precautions taken, casualties were inflicted. He explained to us how a punitive expedition was prepared. This last and extreme means of punishing and establishing order was only used against tribes that had repeatedly committed brutal acts of robbery and murder. To such a tribe a chance was first given of paying a heavy fine. The leaders would be called upon to appear at a fixed time and place, bringing money, rifles and camels to the amount of the fine and to sign, then and there, a treaty with the legitimate Arab Government that would ensure their future peaceful behaviour. If that summons was not obeyed a warning would follow informing them that they would be bombarded if they did not present

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themselves within forty-eight hours. At the same time advice was given to them to remove their cattle and possessions from places that were precisely defined. A well was assigned to them where they could procure drinking-water and be safe, and it was explained how they could make signals to the planes when they wished to surrender. As an introduction to a bombardment a smoke-bomb was always dropped first and only after that real bombs, but no dropping took place when living beings could be seen in the target area. These punitive expeditions had always had a wholesome effect. It was a notable fact that the tribes who were bombed and Hadhramis in general never protested against the methods employed, deeming it not worth-while to mention the eight killed as a result of four expeditions. In their own wars, and particularly in those that continued over long periods, they were used to many more casualties. They would, in fact, come along to make peace in high spirits and would express thanks for the expedition, for because they had fought and blood had flowed they could join the "Sulh Ingrams" without losing face with their old enemies.

This information corresponded with that we had obtained at R.A.F. Headquarters in Aden where the extensive photographic preparations for the punitive expeditions had been shown us. The comparison made by Philby with the Italian bombardments in the Abyssinian war are entirely false. Here was a country whose leaders had invoked British assistance to deliver them from never-ending, internecine wars. Here was no vain-glorious conquest of a free country, no attack by a crushingly superior power on people defending their independence, but the meting out of punishment to bandits who had robbed and murdered their own compatriots. Here was no question of a conqueror on the war-path but of legal authority establishing order and righteousness "for he beareth not the sword in vain".

We were invited to meet the British builders of the new Hadhramaut a last time as their guests in the house in which we had stayed eight years before. It was a former Sultan's palace but was now used as offices and living-quarters for the Resident Adviser to the Sultan and his staff. On Ingrams' orders the latter had "unto the Hadhramis become as a Hadhrami".

After having met Figgis in Haura we were not entirely unprepared but, even so, the contemplation of this gathering of disguised Englishmen at an evening-party gave us the feeling that something was wrong somewhere.

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They too seemed a little ill at ease. They had more or less succeeded in collecting garments that are worn in one part or other of the huge Arabian Peninsula to adorn their persons in a way that they hoped would be becoming to each particular stature and complexion. The results were colourful but lacking in style and transported their astonished guests into the atmosphere of a masquerade. We saw head-dresses of the Yemen, of Nejd and of Moslem India. Ingrams fitted in the best, probably because he wore his clothes with most conviction. For the others it was a lie. Ingrams had donned a dark-blue, knitted-silk shirt with short sleeves and a turn-down collar. Round his waist a broad, elastic belt, with the familiar zip-fastened leather money-pouches sewn on to it, supported a check sarong which hung down to his feet. His strong, bare neck was adorned with a silver necklace from which hung a glowing, red stone, the popular amulet of many beduin. Above the elbow the arm was spanned by a wrought-silver bracelet inlaid with the same red stones. His bright, grey-blue eyes looked at us, half-laughing, half-questioning as our glances wandered up and down his massively-built frame. A discussion of the pros and cons of these far-reaching attempts at local adaption was unavoidable. Ingrams claimed that the change was appreciated equally by beduin and by settled Arabs. In doing this he had tried to pay his tribute to native local styles and habits which should not be doomed to disappear with the arrival of the British. This he felt to be true with regard to dress as well as in the daily habits of life and in spiritual values such as religion and art that find expression in dress. By his concessions in the domain of clothes he had tried to demonstrate that he came to these people hoping to win their confidence. He did not expect them to come to him trying to get accustomed to his foreign appearance. We realized how great a sacrifice it was for an Englishman to honour these principles and wanted to approve but, so far as the clothes were concerned, did not succeed in doing so.

I drew the attention to the fact that the assembled company was dressed more in Javanese than in native Hadhrami fashion. The sarong came from Java; the belt was popular there but was made in Europe; the shirts were from Japan. The Sāda had adopted a Westernized-Japanese style of dress with head-gear borrowed from another Moslem people, the Sultan and his suite had partly adopted the dress of British India. One must go to the beduin to find the real Hadhrami garb.

But we had more serious objections. The way in which this gathering

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of Englishmen was dressed was largely Moslem. Only after conversion to Islam could one wear with complete integrity the dress which, according to old and well-established traditions, goes with that belief and outlook on life. Then indeed "the flag covers the cargo" as we say in Dutch. There was a very wide difference between travelling as an explorer in a primitive country when, in order to avoid attracting unnecessary attention or giving rise to undue fears, one temporarily adopted the dress of the country, and being sent officially to a people as a British representative in order to lead and advise them. In the latter case it was surely more appropriate not to disguise the reality.

That reality is that the Western nations are Christian in tradition, outlook and belief. This is a heritage which cannot be alienated and so any representative of a Western power who goes to help an oriental Moslem people should be true to himself and to his origins and should not shun the difficult way of gaining the confidence of those he is sent to work among, notwithstanding the gulf that divides him from them.

Our proposal to take the next obvious step in a Moslem direction and all grow beards was greeted with general laughter. One act of Ingrams by which he sought to gain confidence in British activity in the Hadhramaut was the strict prohibition of the import of alcohol. That promised well; but will the subsequent advisers to the Sultans take the same line? "It is a consummation devoutly to be wished."

These, however, were secondary matters as preliminaries by people who wanted to understand each other before they started intimate discussions on matters in which they were deeply interested. In Ingrams we recognized a man who had given himself heart and soul to the task which had been entrusted to him and for which he had hoped and longed many years before he was called upon to undertake it. Time will show whether he was the right man in the right place. In *Seiyid Abu Bakr Āl Kāf* he found a co-operator of long experience. These two men had become friends. The "*Sulh Ingrams*" bears Ingrams' name because he had the power of Great Britain behind him and so could satisfy the longing for peace of the *Sāda* and the *Masākīn*, of the town-dwellers and of the greater part of the hungry beduin. But *Seiyid Abu Bakr bin Sheikh Āl Kāf* showed the way to Ingrams and pursued the necessary negotiations with sagacity and patient understanding. It was he who weaned the proud and stubborn warriors from their *husūn* and their far-flung *jōls* and added treaty after treaty to the growing concert.

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An Ingram is goes, after having been privileged in the name of his country to press on the Hadhramaut the noble stamp of the first, direct, British assistance, but Seiyid Abu Bakr Āl Kāf and his companions remain to carry on the task. It is their own country that is at stake and in it a new glory can arise:

Glossary of Arab Words and Expressions

- ahlan wa sahlān: welcome! (being the first part of the classical formula "ahlan wa sahlān wa marhaban" meaning: may your family be prosperous, your way plain and your grazing grounds wide).
- al: definite article. Changes to ad, adh, an, ar, as, ash, at, ath, and az before d, dh, n, r, s, sh, t, th and z, respectively, in spoken Arabic.
- āl: family.
- amn: security, protection.
- 'aqaba, plur. 'iqāb: ascent; in the Hadhramaut the word is specially used for a steep mountain-pass.
- arnab, plur. arānib: hare or rabbit.
- bahr: sea, big river, lake.
- bait, plur. buyūt: house. Buyūt ash-sha'r: houses of hair, tents.
- bakhshish: tip, gift, present.
- bani, sing. ibn: sons, people as in Banī 'Ād wa Thamūd: the sons of 'Ād and Thamūd (two pre-Islamic peoples).
- Bilād ash-Shaitān: Land of the Devil.
- bīr, plur. ābār: well.
- birka, plur. birak: cistern, pool, pond.
- buhār: bright-blue lizard.
- burr: wheat.
- buyūt, sing. bait: see above.
- danā: a word frequently used in beduin songs and sometimes forming in repetition the entire text of a song.
- dār, plur. diyār: see diyār.
- dhabb, plur. dhibāb: thorny-tailed lizard.
- dhabi, plur. dhibā: gazelle.
- dhu'afā, sing. dha'if: the weak: in the Hadhramaut the class of the hard-working people, specially the agricultural labourers.
- dhura: millet (*Andropogon Sorghum*).
- diyār, sing. dār: dwelling, territory, country.
- dōla, plur. duwal: power, state, empire, dynasty.
- dōm 1: small, round fruit of the 'ilb (nibq or sidr).
- dōm 2: kind of palm-tree, the dōm-palm (*Hyphæne*).
- dukhn: kind of fine round-grained millet (*Pennisetum*).
- fish: word only heard in the Wadi Jirdān for fee, present (elsewhere bakhshish).
- gheil, plur. ghuyūl: stream of water.
- gheyāl: man responsible for the upkeep of irrigation-channels (ghuyūl) and the equitable distribution of the water.
- hait: wall.
- hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca.
- harīm, sing. hurma: women.
- harmal: a very common, poisonous desert-weed (*Rhazya stricta*).
- harra: lava-plateau.
- hās: mosquitos.

Glossary of Arabic Words and Expressions

hil (probably a corruption of ahl: men): local way of indicating tribal connexion:

Hil Shams, the men of the Shams tribe.

hila, plur. hiyal: ruse.

hissu: cistern cut in the rocky bottom of the jöl for storing water.

Hukūma: authority, power, government.

hūri: canoe.

husūn, sing. husn: fortress, citadel.

ibn, see banī.

ibn as-sābil: son of the road, traveller.

'ilb, see nibq and sidr: three names for the same kind of tree (*Zizyphus Spina-Christi*) producing the dōm-fruit.

Irshād (al —): "guidance on the right road". The name of a Hadhrami organization in the Netherlands East Indies opposing prerogatives of the Sāda.

ithl: tamarisk, casuarina tree.

'Izz ad-Dīn: the Glory of the Religion.

jambiyah, plur. jambiyāt: short, curved dagger usually in a silver sheath often adorned with red semi-precious stones and stuck in the waist-band.

jammāl: camel driver.

ja'ush: military title for non-commissioned officer of the rank of sergeant.

jebel, plur. jibāl: mountain.

Jebel al-Milh: Salt Mountain.

jinn: demons, evil spirits.

jöl: rocky plateau of Southern Arabia.

kharif, plur. akhrāf: harvest of rain, reservoir of rain-water.

kōr: flat mountain-top.

kuffār, sing. kāfir: unbeliever.

kufri: belonging to unbelief (kufr).

libn: dried mud-bricks.

maghrib: sunset.

mahbūb: beloved.

Mahdi (al —): the one conducted along the right road.

majlis: sitting, audience, company, tribunal, place of meeting (derived from the verb to sit).

maksūr: broken. al-Maksūr: the broken one.

mansab, plur. manāsib: dignity, post, function, hence dignitary.

maqbara: graveyard, cemetery.

al-maridh: the sick one.

masākin, sing. miskīn: the poor, used in the Hadhramaut to designate the class of manual labourers.

mashāyikh: one of the plural forms of a sheikh.

masila: the seil-bed, see seil.

masjid, plur. masājīd: mosque (derived from the verb to prostrate oneself).

Masna' (al —): the building; used for big buildings such as palaces and fortresses.

mazāra: a place of visitation particularly for religious purposes (derived from the verb to visit).

meshōr: name given to a tall kind of tree in the Wadi Jirdān.

miswāk: twig or root from the rāk-bush used as a brush for cleaning teeth.

muftī: a Moslem authority empowered to issue a fatwā, a juridical-religious decision.

muqaddam: a leader, title given in the Hadhramaut to a governor of a region (derived from the verb to walk in front).

museibeli: kind of corn.

Glossary of Arabic Words and Expressions

- nāqa: milk-giving she-camel.
 nashr: a dwarf-palm from which the Arabs make an intoxicating liquor.
 Nasrānī, plur. Nasārā: Christian, follower of the Man of Nazareth.
 nejd: high plateau.
 neqāba, plur. nuqab: name given in the Hadhramaut to cisterns cut in the rocky surface of the jōl for storing rain-water.
 nibq, see 'ilb and sidr: tree (*Zizyphus Spina Christi*).
 qabila, plur. qabāil: tribe.
 qabīlī: a member of a tribe.
 qabr: grave.
 qāma: measurement of length being the distance between the extreme ends of the middle fingers of a man's outstretched arms (about five and a half feet).
 qāret: small village, originally a lonely hill, a village built on such a hill.
 qarn: horn, top of the head, point, steep isolated hill.
 qatār, qutur: train; string of animals.
 qasab: reed, any plant with long, hollow stem.
 qirba, plur. qirab: water-skin.
 qishr: peel, husk of a fruit.
 qubba: domed roof usually built over the tomb of a revered person.
 rabsha: quarrel, fight (probably a local term of the Aden Hinterland and the Hadhramaut).
 rahīn: hostage.
 rāk: a bush (*Salvadora persica*) the twigs and roots are used as toothbrush (miswāk); the leaves are eaten by camels but cause them an acute diarrhoea; the small grape-like fruit is edible.
 rās: head, chief, top, cape, principal port, beginning, principle, origin.
 rās al-'aqaba: head (highest point) of a pass.
 rās al-wādi: head (beginning) of a wadi.
 reib: buttermilk.
 reida: centre or fixed dwelling place in tribal territory.
 sāb (corruption of sāhib): an Indian title of address for a superior; Sir.
 Sāda, sing. Seiyid: title given to direct descendants of the Prophet through his son-in-law 'Alī.
 sāih: traveller, hermit.
 salāt: ritual prayer to be performed five times a day.
 sāqī: water carrier; boy or man who waters a garden.
 samn: melted sheep and goats' butter.
 sarākīl: European government officials.
 sarong: loin-cloth, a Malay word adopted by the Hadhramis and arabicized sarūng, plur. sawārin.
 seil, plur. suyūl: flood-water.
 Seiyid, plur. Sāda: see Sāda.
 sha'b: cleft in rock.
 sheikh, plur. shuyūkh or mashāikh: old man, elder, chief, professor, director.
 shughl: work.
 shughl al-kuffār: work of the unbelievers.
 sidr, see 'ilb and nibq: tree (*Zizyphus Spina Christi*).
 siqāya: wayside building containing drinking-water for travellers, usually surmounted by small dome and whitewashed.
 siyāra: a tribal guide who assures with his own person the safety of a caravan when passing through the territory of his tribe.

Glossary of Arabic Words and Expressions

sōt: rocky plateau lying between the Wādis Jirdān and 'Amd, also called Jebel Sōt.

sulh: peace.

sumr: a kind of acacia.

talh: acacia, probably the Abyssinian mountain acacia.

taswīr, plur. tasāwīr: photograph.

tīn: loam, clay, arable land.

tūkul: round straw hut introduced from Ethiopia.

wabar, plur. wubar: animal of the size and appearance of the marmot but belonging to an entirely different family, the *Hyracoidea*, usually placed between the rhinoceroses and elephants. They are remarkable for their rodent-like teeth, the tail is short, the colour brownish-grey. Most species and races of *Hyrax* live in Africa; one pale-coloured species (*Procavia syriaca*) lives in Syria; this animal is the one referred to in the Scriptures as the "coney". Local races of this Syrian *Hyrax* are found in Palestine and Southern Arabia. See *The Standard Natural History from Amæba to Man*, edited by W. P. Pycroft, F.L.S.

wādi, plur. widyān or audiyā: valley, bed of stream or river.

Wahhābī: follower of 'Abd al-Wahhāb, founder of the religious sect of the Wahhābis.

wa'l: ibex.

walī, plur. auliyā: friend, master, governor, protector, companion, Muslim saintly man.

waqf, plur. auqāf: pious bequest or foundation.

zaghārit, plur. zaghūrta: long shrill trilling in the throat usually associated with women as an expression of joy or mourning.

ziyāra: visit to a holy place.

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